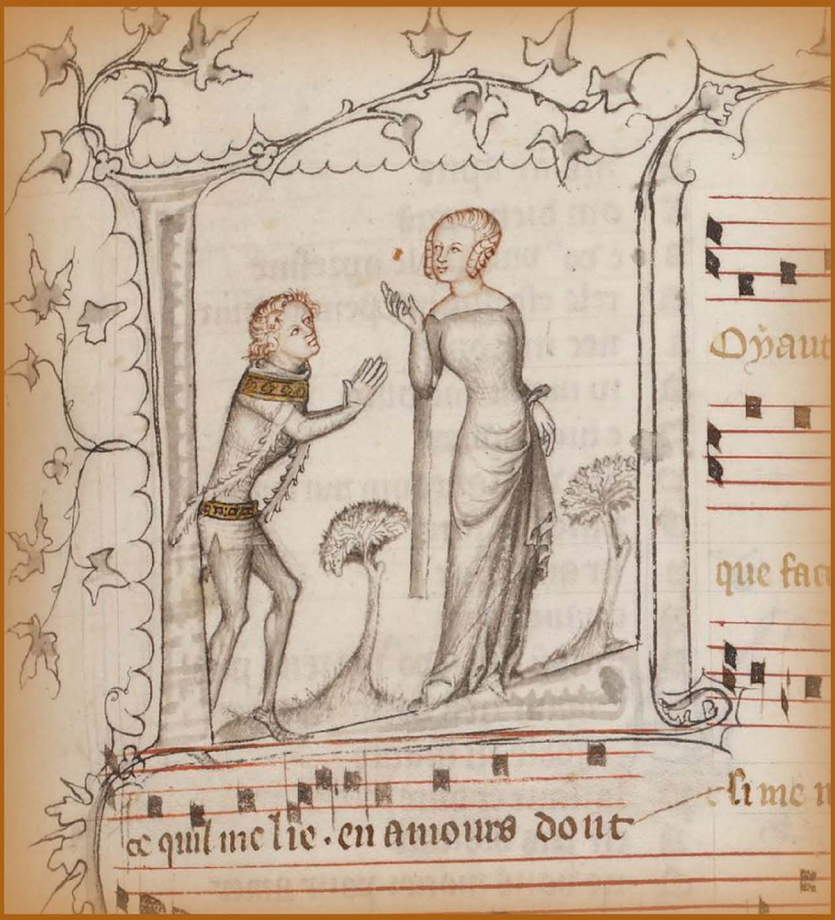
Machaut's Legacy

The Judgment Poetry Tradition in the Later Middle Ages and Beyond



EDITED BY R. BARTON PALMER
AND BURT KIMMELMAN

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PREFACE

Machaut and the Late Medieval *Dit*

Guillaume de Machaut: Poet and Musician

Guillaume de Machaut (1300?–1377) was beyond a doubt the most celebrated writer of late medieval France, while his cultural influence (which extended to England) and amazing productivity were rivaled only by Christine de Pizan (1365–1430?). Machaut's reputation rested on his authorship of an immense and varied corpus of works, many of which were composed for, and in honor of, the several grand nobles with whose courts he was at various times associated, including kings John of Bohemia (1296–1346) and Charles of Navarre (1332–1387). As a musician, he wrote more than twenty motets and a polyphonic setting of the mass, the virtuosity and innovations of which have made him one of the most significant figures of medieval music. Of musical as well as literary interest is his extensive body of lyric poems in various fixed forms such as the ballade and the virelay. In fact, Machaut was largely responsible for the continuing fashion of this type of poetry. A central aspect of Machaut's achievement is that he provided musical settings for many of these lyrics using recently developed forms of notation. Finally, following in the tradition of thirteenth century love vision poetry, especially the *Romance of the Rose*, Machaut composed ten long narrative and didactic poems (*dits amoureux* or "love tales" as well as others with philosophical/religious or historical themes), and four shorter ones that are all concerned with the love experience. The considerable number of surviving manuscripts, some beautifully illuminated, testifies eloquently to this popularity. His *dits* exerted a substantial influence on other contemporary writers and

some of the generation to follow, especially Eustache Deschamps, Oton de Granson, Jean Froissart, Christine de Pizan, and John Gower, as well as Geoffrey Chaucer, whose poetry evidences a close and reverent reading of narrative works by the French master.

Machaut's contemporaries and those that followed him on both sides of the Channel in the next literary generation found much to admire in his exploration of the formal and thematic possibilities of the *dit*, the genre he did not invent but perhaps did more than any other author of the period to refine and promote. The critical essays collected in this volume are devoted to an assessment of this legacy, with a special focus on what modern critics have come to term Machaut's debate series. This suite of two intricately connected *dits* and a lyric coda comprises the *Jugement dou roy de Behaingne* [Judgment of the King of Bohemia]; its sequel of sorts, the *Jugement dou roy de Navarre* [Judgment of the King of Navarre]; and the *Lay de Plour* [Lay of Weeping]. This unique textual plurality is discussed in more detail further below (edition and English translation in Palmer).

The *Dit*

Textual traditions are almost always understood as constituted by a succession of distinct singularities that make a claim to being considered as, and in terms of, themselves alone. But in practice individual texts are hardly ever self-contained in such an absolute sense, being joined by various sorts of bonds to others, while often participating in more than one series or "multiplicity." In the Middle Ages, especially prior to 1300, this essential fact of textual ontology is writ very large, exemplified particularly by ever-expanding, and eventually vast, corpora of connected works that, in a brilliant stroke of useful categorization, were separated on the basis of narrative materials and themes by the twelfth-century French poet Jean Bodel into the three national "matters," those of France, Rome, and Britain. Surely the most famous and influential of the three is this last, which focuses on King Arthur, his Round Table, and the tragic history of his kingdom, affording generations of poets and prose writers unending opportunities for the re-use, remaking, appropriation, sequelizing, rebooting, and thus the continuing revivification, through transnational and translinguistic continuations of various kinds, of the already-said.

Criticism of such a tradition, as commentators have remarked, searches in vain for "some principle by which individual texts form a meaningful whole, some unity that might be discerned from a multiplicity of parts" (Sturm-Maddox and Maddox 1). But these varied and extensive multiplicities cannot be conceived in neoromantic terms, that is, as constituted by some form of collective intentionality that might provide "meaning." As literary phenomena, "matters" include the expressive practices of authorship, but in their sheer size and decades-long productivity they are in no sense defined by or limited to individual voices. The literature of the early Middle Ages is dominated by these inchoate and ever-changing constellations of texts, as well as by the two flexible genres, conventionally termed "epic" and "romance," that for the most part constitute them.

Late medieval literature, though, at least in northern Europe, is quite different—being dominated by a form, the *dit*, that from a modern point of view seems resolutely novelistic. This is to say that the *dit* is devoted to the "new" or, more precisely, the "untextualized"—just the opposite of matter-based textual production, which always begins in some sense where some other text has left off. In addition to focusing in large part on original material, Machaut's *dits* are customarily characterized by formal experimentation, including the intricate and multidirectional forms of seriality that connect the three individual works of the debate series to one another. Here authorship assumes a more central role even as Machaut dramatizes the discontents of reception (especially the displeasure of noble patrons with what a poet produces), confecting a fictionalized confrontation in which his own practice and professional suitability are humorously called into question. Do his works honor ladies, as they should? Or does his status as a learned clerk dispose him toward the antifeminism that was then a stereotypical character fault of churchmen like himself?

In the final analysis, this series is less about the relative merits of men and women as lovers (the ostensible subject of the debates that occupy the two *jugement* poems) and more a turning-into-text of Machaut's own practice, including the all-important relationships with his social superiors, as well as the hardly insignificant question of the nature of his achievement. Not a "real" question, of course, posed to the actual Guillaume de Machaut by readers doubtful of his abilities and character, but one directed instead to the poet's second self, his intertextual reflex, as a pretext for the new composition and the ostentatious display of authorial

excellence. To put this another way, Machaut constitutes in large part his own tradition, and what comes to matter most as the multiplicity relevant to an understanding and appreciation of his accomplishment is the oeuvre rather than any transauthorial matter.

Logically speaking, the material result of such a self-regarding conception of authorship should be the collected works manuscript, in whose central feature would be a multiplicitous demonstration of writerly excellence. Under these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that from an early stage in his career Machaut undertook the production of a codex containing his complete works, musical as well as poetical, and that toward the end of his life he not only commissioned (or at least approved) the preparation of elaborate versions of this collection but also for these collections was sufficiently unabashed to compose a poetic *Prologue*, in which he with something of faux humility explained how Nature and Love had commanded him to create works in their collective honor (see Earp for full details).

These compositional energies reflect the spectacular growth and development in the fourteenth century and following of the *dit*, which proved to be an extremely flexible literary genre. Unlike most early medieval narrative, the *dit* eschews the preexisting thematic corpora that make possible a vast range of fictionalizing that is genetically related. Like the novel, the *dit* resolutely resists any subordination of the individual text to ordinate traditions that increase in cultural authority through continuing acts of invocation and re-use. The cultural histories of the three medieval matters are characterized by the continual accretion of "range" to which each individual text contributes in terms of narrative mass, even as by its very existence each new text expands the possibilities for further imitation and linkage. Within the context of the matter that enfolds them, textual boundaries are never understood as closed, but rather as open to a continuation that can always inspire further continuation, producing complex, always-incomplete multiplicities that tell and re-tell similar stories. These lines of interdependence, formal and thematic, extend backward and forward, generating forms of seriality that have strained the methods of modern criticism, which has evolved largely for the purpose of reading and evaluating textual singularities, reflecting a neoromantic ideology of a formal self-containment that reflects authorial intentionality.

The *dit* is utterly different from such matter-based narrative, anticipating what will become a key feature of neoromantic literary theory: the notion that authors, and in some sense their experience, constitutes the *fons et origo* of every work they sign as their own (a gesture that Machaut famously literalizes with the anagrammatic inclusions of his name at the end of some of his *dits*). The *dit* constitutes, in fact, the formal and thematic "other" to such impressively massive matters as the Arthurian roman and the chanson de geste, with its invocation of speech (*dit* from *dire* "to say") perhaps pointing toward the unreproducibility of parole. The roman, by way of contrast, takes its name for the vernacular language in which it first appeared (*romanz* = "French"), and it fittingly shows affinities with the rule-governed nature of langue, in which the abstracting generalities of a constantly expanding repertoire customarily prevail over the idiosyncratic.

Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin has famously suggested that, in its relentless attraction to both the written and also the not yet written, the modern novel is generically anti-generic. This is because the novel is said to offer, in contrast with formal traditions such as the epic and romance, a "new zone opened . . . for structuring literary images . . . the zone of maximal contact with the present . . . in all its openendedness" ("Epic and Novel" 11). With no fixed formal structure or conventional subject matter, the novel is defined by its lack of a defining feature beyond the most unhelpfully vague: that it is prose fiction of a certain length in which named authorship plays a significant role. Had he been acquainted with the tradition of the *dit*, Bakhtin might have been inclined to view the novel's receptivity to languages, styles, and themes of all kinds as interestingly anticipated by this innovative form from a much earlier period.

If the novel, as Bakhtin argues, is a kind of summa or master form capable of re-orienting and re-presenting texts of every variety, then this unlimited capacity to accommodate heterogeneous sources is anticipated by the *dit*, which is most importantly characterized by its attraction to the quotidian, the occasional, even the autobiographical, and, in consequence, by its formal preoccupation with pastiche and discontinuity.[1] To put this another way, if novelistic in its anti-generic openness, defined by its capacity to absorb, re-orient, and re-present existing forms of textuality, the *dit* seems remarkably postmodern, with its often self-reflexive

appropriation of what theorist Fredric Jameson terms the museum of dead styles, or a literary past that can be resuscitated by the blank parody of re-discovery and re-use (112–25).

Such openness disposes the form outward, toward the narrative and themes to be incorporated. And yet, while he never forecloses centrifugal possibilities of inclusion, Machaut also and perhaps more characteristically turns the *dit* inward, redirecting its openness toward its own ontology and conditions of production or pre-text, an innovative move that was subsequently widely imitated by his literary contemporaries and those in the next generation. However syncretic they are in terms of their materials and themes, providing surprising juxtapositions or unanticipated forms of re-use, Machaut's *dits* are in a sense all of a piece since they are most notably characterized by a centripetality that leads them to focus on various aspects of his text-making practice. This form of authorial energy gives rise to creative effects that are especially on display in the debate series. Across an impressively large oeuvre, this metafictional urge manifests itself in a continually re-inventive fashion, whose variety reflects the different materials (literary, personal, historical, et cetera) on which each text draws. Such a balance between outward and inward energies anticipates the evolution of that most characteristic of modern fictional forms in the sense that, as Bakhtin suggests, the novel, though lacking a "unitary language" and disposed to reproduce all those it encounters, locates the author at "the center of organization where all levels intersect" ("From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse" 49).

Of course, in the aesthetic tradition that has risen to prominence since Henry James in the late nineteenth century, the novelist is customarily an all-disposing ventriloquist who disappears from view, with his commentary undecidably "assigned" to the characters (indirect free discourse). In the modern novel, the narrator only occasionally materializes in the diegesis. In contrast, his late medieval counterpart ventriloquizes, but does not disappear, often finding some formal means to presence himself. Like the other poets writing in this tradition, Machaut constitutes not only the subjective source of the *dit*'s verbal flow but also in one guise or another, he is either his own main character or an important subsidiary presence when those of noble birth claim the structural spotlight. In this insistence on the organizing energies as well as the representational possibilities of authorial singularity, the Machaldian *dit* proves generically ungeneric,

as the subsequent history of the form makes clear. His contemporaries, and those in the next generation, produced many similarly self-regarding texts—each of which is resolutely disposed toward uniqueness and disconnection, defying regularizing tendencies, even while invoking, sometimes humorously, the works of others, especially those of Machaut, whose writing remains a constant point of reference for this literary tradition as several of the essays in this volume bear witness.

Inward Looking Tales of the Self

Another way of saying this is that the *dit* exists in se and per se; an important exception is Machaut's debate series, but its three constituent texts are connected only in general terms to a genre (the love debate) and, more important, to each other. In any case, whatever transtextual connections *dits* may establish are not mandated by a tradition that molds and prescribes. As a fictionalist, Machaut exploits the possibilities of the various genres of love narrative. He configures himself as the servant of ladies, but he does not serve (but rather makes serve) the various forms of such poeticizing that constituted his literary inheritance. Consider, for example, Machaut's *Dit dou Lyon* [Tale of the Lion] with its unmistakable reminiscences of Chrétien de Troyes's *Chevalier au Lion* [Knight with the Lion], composed two centuries earlier. Machaut approaches the form of the *roman d'avanture* from outside, as it were, objectifying its features while subjectifying its narrative, establishing "impossible" connections to the clerkly implied author who takes the generic place previously occupied by one of Arthur's most accomplished knights.

In Machaut's oeuvre more generally, invocations of textual otherness, manifesting themselves in appropriations and allusions, are freely chosen for effect. The resulting connections are rhetorical; they are not the constitutive features of a collective, transtextual identity into which Machaut inserts himself and to which he subordinates his creative efforts. In its insistence upon the unique, the unanticipated, and the ephemeral, the *dit* is strongly drawn toward the at least ostensibly autobiographical as an obvious source of emerging story. The *dit* thus embodies a truism about the connection between author and form that modern novels, and the literary ideology of self-revelation that is their aesthetic base, also clearly reflect. Like many modern novels that fictionalize the lives of their authors,

the *dit* is slantly autobiographical, often providing humorously distorted versionings of the author that complexly straddle the boundary between life-writing and unabashed fabulation.

Yet, it is important to note, the Machaldian *dit* continually escapes the confinement of the autobiographical. For its intratextual master of ceremonies (if in complicated ways that connect to such modern notions as narrator and implied author) is meant to be understood as a fabulized, but still recognizable, version of the poet, who assumes the burden of continuing production, an activity that in one work after another is dramatized or narrativized, providing a mise-en-abîme for the very poem the reader is perusing. And such production is a task that necessarily involves more than the narration of the self, for it generally includes substantial invocations of literary tradition in some form. Machaut's *dits* are disposed toward a repertoire of useful texts that can be appropriated as needed, especially the *Ovide moralisé* [Ovid Moralized], an early fourteenth-century French rendition of Ovidian story and classical themes more generally, and Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, a sixth-century Latin philosophical work considered in the Middle Ages to be an indispensable account of human experience and purpose. But in the end the Machaldian *dit* is less a recycling (more properly, reworking) of honored texts from the cultural past and more of an inward-regarding text that constantly references itself as an aesthetic object in the making.

Tracing the practice of a complicated art and its peripatetic source, the Machaldian *dit* finds its appropriate reflex in the individual experiences that it traces and/or that for some reason call it into being. These are of an amazing range and variety, especially considering that the *dit* remains in some respects tied to the love vision tradition from which it emerged under Machaut's leadership during the first half of the fourteenth century. There exists an essential structural similarity—a palpable authorial presence that is centering, to use Bakhtin's term, a master of ceremony consisting of, but also exceeding its presence as both voice and character—among compositions that are otherwise radically dissimilar. Consider the largely discursive *Confort d'ami* [Comfort for a Friend], occasioned by Machaut's felt need to offer a formally and thematically complex consolation to his imprisoned patron, Charles, king of Navarre, a work that is radically different from the *Fonteinne amoureuse* [The Fountain of Love], with its narrative devoted to an unusual encounter between the poet and

a nobleman who is revealed to be one of Machaut's patrons, the Duc de Berry. This encounter climaxes in a shared dream dominated by the mythological eminence of Venus, goddess of Love, whereas the *Confort* ends with a series of homely admonitions to the miserable prisoner (comb your hair, make sure not to eat to excess, show no weakness to your jailers, and, above all else, do not lose heart).

Self-referential metafictionality furnishes such varied works both a technique (first-person character narration) and a self-generating, authorial "matter": the always interesting vicissitudes (emotional, psychological, metaphysical, and professional) of a life equally as imbricated in the chanciness of authorial *avanture* that are as entertaining as what preoccupies any Arthurian quester. Nothing, it seems, can fail to be grist for the narrative mill devoted to a formal singularity that anticipates the de rigueur newness of the novel. Nowhere is this more obvious than in Machaut's debate series in which authorship itself generates a most remarkable adventure.

The Debate Series

The *Jugement Behaingne* begins in a most conventional fashion, with the narrator's reminiscences of the adventures he passed through one late April morning, a time appointed by Nature and God for love. Love, he affirms, is an emotional experience that affects many men and women, bringing them both joy and pain. He confesses to being an experienced and successful lover, and following a nightingale, he enters a lonely glade, there to contemplate in solitude the indescribable beauty of the natural music he hears. This short opening draws explicitly on the well-known *Roman de la rose* [Romance of the Rose] in which the archetypal Lover similarly falls prey to the enticements of springtime. In the *Rose*, after falling asleep, the lover experiences a vision of the Garden of Love, where the poem's complex, allegorical drama unfolds.

In Machaut's reworking, however, the narrator does not fall asleep, but becomes witness to a different kind of drama that takes place nearby. The structure of the *Rose* has been invoked only to be radically transformed. The elaborate interplay between allegorical personages that lends psychological and intellectual depth to the *Rose* has been altered in favor of a confrontation between two human characters, a man and a woman,

unknown to one another, whose experiences in love have been, up to a point, similar. Both have known not only the joy that love brings but also the overwhelming and enduring sorrow that comes from its loss. Yet this loss, in their two cases, has intriguingly different sources: the man's lady, who still lives, has proven unfaithful, while the woman's lover has been killed in the exercise of his knightly vocation. The poem takes as one of its main themes the measuring of one loss against the other. Which of these distressed lovers suffers the greater pain?

The issue is debated first (and inconclusively) by the protagonists, only later to be submitted as a question of love to be discussed and settled by the king of Bohemia's courtiers, allegorical personages who each represent, in the tradition of the *Rose*, different and to some degree incompatible, aspects of the love experience. There the debate moves from a weighing of the sorrows felt by the knight and the lady to a consideration of a much more difficult question, one that is, by royal command, never finally adjudicated: Should reason guide the behavior of those in love, who are under the powerful sway of both the affection itself and the impetuousness of their immature age? In this "digression," we see Machaut coming to grips with a dilemma developed more fully, if never answered decisively, in the *Rose*. The king, a mature man, sides with Raison ("Reason"), opining that when her grief passes, the lady will find another lover in accordance with natural imperatives. The assembled court assents unanimously to this judgment, though we can imagine that Jeunesse ("Youth") and Amour ("Love") are not happy with the outcome, which endorses the opinion of Raison that love does not survive the death of the body and thus can exert but a limited power over those under its dominion. For eight days the courtiers attempt, with little apparent success, to assuage the suffering of the king's two guests, who are finally allowed to depart after receiving generous gifts.

Beyond the two questions of who suffers more and whether lovers should heed the dictates of the head rather than those of heart, the debate, if only indirectly, raises a third, which will become the focus of the poem's sequel. Who prove superior in love, men or women? The knight is judged the winner in the debate, an indication, perhaps, of the supposedly greater power of male reasoning and discernment—or it may be that the king has simply decided in favor of a fellow male. In any case, it is the knight's continuing devotion to his lady, however undeserving she

undoubtedly is, that occasions the court's discussion of the relative claims of reason and emotion to direct human action. Moreover, the knight has no power to affect the cause of his misery, which is his beloved's faithlessness. Of the two women who figure in this poem, one is given to mistaken opinions (overestimating a misery that, it is predicted, will soon pass), while the other is a promiscuous betrayer of male trust, who inspires virtuous devotion only to inflict pointless pain on a man who merits, as all present agree, a quite different reward.

The poem's two men, in contrast, reflect the highest masculine ideals. Both are submissive to love and mindful of the proper service due the woman to whom they have pledged themselves. These exemplary men suffer only because of what lies beyond their jurisdiction: for one, the vagaries of fortune leading to an early death; and for the other, the instability of a woman's heart that mocks the steadiness of the love bestowed upon it. It could be argued, as a female figure of great authority does in the *Navarre*, that the author, who has created a fiction that so obviously favors men over women, has insulted the gentler sex. If this was unintentional, then she thinks that the author must be under the sway of that complex of incorrect, malicious notions about the "inferiority" of women that we term misogyny.

Whether Machaut is guilty of this charge is the question that, with no little humor and irony, is debated in the *Jugement Navarre*, where he becomes his own main character, an embattled poet named Guillaume. The *Behaingne* metafictionally explores the contradictions of the poet's artistic/social position, as the servant yet also the guide for the nobility who collectively constitute his public. The *Navarre*, in contrast, concerns itself with the poet's paradoxical subservience to but command of the love experience, marking out, if in an ironic fashion, the limits of the author's creative freedom. What was extratextual in the *Behaingne*, namely the author's intentions and his responsibility to advance only "true" opinion, becomes the center of the new work, as Machaut himself—or, more precisely, a humorously inept, fictional version of the poet—is called to account for what one angry reader, a powerful woman whose favor he had enjoyed, identifies as his wrong opinion about the relative merits of the two genders.

This transformation in the poet's self-presentation is in some ways anticipated within the *Behaingne*, one of whose most important, and

innovative, features is its dramatization of the role the poet plays in court society. There is an unmistakable (pseudo)autobiographical strain in the *Behaingne*, which asks to be read in part as an expression of the poet's understandable uncertainties about his position: as clerk and commoner, to be sure, but also as the designated spokesman of emotional idealism, as an authority on the miseries and joys of the love experience. In the first part of the *Behaingne*, the narrator's solitude is active, as he witnesses unseen the debate while attending closely to it. The sudden, dramatic interchange between the knight and the lady, means that the narrator's desire for silent meditation about his own experience with love is displaced from focus as well as he is unwillingly turned into an unseen and eavesdropping figure, the very image of Guillaume de Machaut the courtly poet, who attends to understanding the ideas advanced by the debating pair. Using his artistic powers, he will convert these ideas into poetry, into the very work that he has created from the experience, as he remarks in the *Behaingne*'s coda. But the narrator (and by extension Guillaume himself) is not content to be a simple witness. However, this dissatisfaction surfaces only after he realizes that their encounter has come to an impasse and requires a judge for its resolution.

Transforming himself into a character, Machaut/Guillaume volunteers to take the pair of disputants to the nearby castle of Durbuy, where John of Bohemia is in residence, and where he himself is well known, or so he says. The king, the narrator assures his social betters, will arrange for this disagreement to be fairly adjudicated. If his experience in love must be denied the privilege of focus, the poet's duties as teacher and advisor cannot be so easily laid aside. That experience, however, offers no easy truths to be confidently endorsed. The conflict between Raison, on the one hand, and Jeunesse and Amour, on the other, does not finally admit of a simple solution in favor of either clear-headed restraint or reckless self-abandon.

In contrast, the *Navarre* offers a lively, occasionally raucous debate that raises the issue of antifeminism, which comes to the fore as Guillaume's supposed promotion of male superiority in the *Behaingne* is faulted and then debated. The *Navarre* is the only work in the Machaut corpus that explicitly takes a previous poem as its subject matter or pre-text; in fact, the work's full title in ms BN ff 1584, which might have been prepared under the poet's personal supervision, is *Le Jugement dou Roy de Navarre contre le Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne* [The Judgment of the King of

Navarre against the Judgment of the King of Bohemia]. The link between the two works is thus established from the outset.

What prompted Machaut to write a sequel (in some sense) to one of his most popular works, a sequel that suggested the earlier poem was somehow deficient or faulty? Scholars have sometimes suggested that Guillaume had personal reasons for writing the *Navarre*. The *Behaingne*, it is inferred, must have been criticized for its unusual "doctrine" in noble circles; Guillaume's second judgment poem, then, would be an answer to those charges, an answer that could be seen as a retraction of the earlier judgment that cunningly does not refute it. The fact is, however, that we know nothing about the reception of the *Behaingne* beyond an evident popularity attested to by the large number of surviving copies. The *Fonteinne amoureuse* and the *Confort d'ami*, it is true, are both motivated by extraliterary events involving Machaut's patrons at the time: respectively, the departure of John of Berry for temporary exile as a hostage and Charles of Navarre's imprisonment by the king of France. These events are clearly indicated and detailed within the texts themselves, and they correspond to what historical sources report about the nobles in question. Charles is addressed by name in the *Confort*, and the anonymous nobleman in the *Fonteinne amoureuse* is revealed to be John in a closing anagram. In contrast, it is an allegorical character Bonneürté ("Good Fortune"), whose dissatisfaction triggers Guillaume's bungling defense of his earlier poem, not a fabulized version of someone from the upper levels of the aristocracy who constituted Machaut's patrons and intended public. Charles, king of Navarre, it is true, does figure in the work, but only as a secondary character whose principal role is to deliver Guillaume to a judgment that, despite the poem's title, is not his own alone, but has been arrived at through the prosecutorial excellence of Bonneürté and the advice of her mostly female courtiers.

To be sure, Guillaume erstwhile patroness can be identified, if less certainly, as a real figure in Guillaume's life, Bonne, the daughter of John of Bohemia. And the poem also contains references to real events; its opening section treats the narrator's melancholic reaction to the plague and other disasters of the years 1349–50. But in the confrontation between Guillaume and his accusers, the only "real" character is Charles of Navarre, just as in the obviously fabulized debate in the *Behaingne* at Durbuy, the only character based on an actual historical figure is king John. It

seems best, therefore, to conclude that the *Navarre* constructs the problems of Guillaume the protagonist for the purpose of generating a playful and entertaining text, a task at which the poet proved quite successful.

By making his previous poem the issue of a contentious debate, Guillaume is able to focus on a character other than the experiencing-I he inherited from tradition—the version of the lover/narrator that he inhabits, if anonymously, in the *Behaingne*. In its place, by turning the erstwhile extratextual into the textual, the counter-judgment can offer a less fictionalized version of the real Guillaume, a clerk protective of his literary reputation as affected by that previous work, even as he is concerned about—must be concerned about—the reaction of the nobility to his representation of both their experience and also their moral values. The *Navarre* dramatizes the complexities and ironies of a new version of the experiencing-I, one who is the producing-I, the self whose experiences with writing texts become the material of other texts written by the same self. Machaut's innovative transformation of convention was imitated by other poets in the period, including Geoffrey Chaucer (*The Legend of Good Women*), Christine de Pizan (*The Book of the City of Ladies*), and Jean Froissart (*The Lovers' Prison*).

Machaut's focus on his own experiences is obvious from the beginning of the poem that treats, with accurate historical detail, the disturbing events of 1349–50, especially the outbreak of the Black Death, and his unsurprisingly melancholy reaction to the advent of the disease. Its sudden passing allows the poet to resume solitary enjoyments—especially hare hunting—and be open to the love experience, which here assumes a very untraditional shape. On his horse, and with his hounds deployed across the fields, the narrator's pursuit of hares is interrupted by a message from Bonneürté, said to be "his lady," who sinks him back into a melancholy from which he is somewhat rescued by the lightheartedness of the debate's conclusion. Appearing before this *grande dame*, Guillaume finds himself accused of defaming ladies in the writing of a poem which, though unnamed, cannot be other than the *Behaingne*. Brought to Bonneürté's castle after an inconclusive brief exploration of her complaint, the question of his guilt is debated by the lady's courtiers before the king of Navarre, who agrees to serve as judge.

Guillaume is found guilty of promoting the incorrect opinion that men are superior to women in the game of love—and also of ineptly arguing

his case (a judgment with which most readers would agree). A further issue, and an important one, is that Guillaume is found presumptuous and disrespectful for disagreeing with his social superior and patroness, persisting in his doomed public defense of his actions and opinions even though, mid-debate, he is cautioned that it might be time to give in graciously and accept the chastisement of Bonneürté. In the end, he is chagrined but preserves something of his dignity by graciously accepting his condemnation. He cheerfully agrees to perform an appropriate penance, which is the composition of three lyrical pieces in fixed forms with, this time, the "correct" doctrine, demonstrating his heartfelt acceptance of the superiority of ladies.

The structural similarities between the two debates poems are many and often striking. In the *Behaingne*, the sorrowing lady, lost in gloomy thoughts, ignores the knight's greeting; this prompts their conversation and leads to the debate. Similarly, Guillaume's enthusiasm for the hunt blinds him to the arrival in the fields of a "lady of great nobility," who, alerted to the poet's identity by her squire, sends him a message to appear before her. Indeed, she is the very lady whom Guillaume serves, although it is only later that he learns her name even as, in the aftermath of his defeat, he learns the truth of her substantial power to bestow worldly prosperity on those she favors. This inconsistency conceals a hidden meaning, namely that Guillaume is unthinkingly aware. Like the traditional instructress figures of love allegory or the mysterious, supernatural ladies of Arthurian romance, Bonneürté appears in order to correct and enlighten a man in need of guidance. As it turns out, what she has to offer is advice about Guillaume's career; the judgment she engineers involves a renewal of the poet's contract to write about ladies and love in the appropriate fashion.

As their debate develops, however, what is most significant is the fact that in this poem Guillaume takes the place of the knight as the male member of the debating pair. This change signals the most important difference of the *Navarre*. In the *Behaingne* the levels of traditional love allegory/debate and commentary on the poet's role in its making are kept distinct; the twist in the conventional structure of the poem calls attention to the narrator's role (and its reflection of the author's historical predicament as court poet/lyric voice). In the later judgment poem, the fiction itself becomes an examination of the poet's performance as poet.

Instead of a response to a conventional question of love, the debate here is more like a law suit in which the plaintiff makes a complaint whose rightness is to be determined by an impartial judge.

Unlike the interlocutors in the earlier poem, Guillaume is literally put on trial for faulty authorship and behavior not suitable to a member of the *clergie* whose social function is to serve those in the aristocratic order above. The poem closes with his confession that he has made this *dit* in order to better recognize his fault; he intends to present this lengthier work to the lady along with the promised lyrics. In some early manuscripts, the *Lay de Plour* follows the end of the judgment immediately; in the later manuscripts, it is either missing entirely or found among the other lyric poems. It seems that Machaut initially thought it should follow the narrative poem that is its pre-text but later changed his mind and had this work included in the section of the manuscripts devoted to his considerable body of other lyrics.

In the *Navarre*, Guillaume puts his own poetry on trial in a work whose sophistication and finesse equally testify to his commanding, confident talent. The poem playfully treats the relationship of the poet to his *métier* and to his patrons, turning the poet's individual control over the content of his works (and the reputation they make or do not make for him) into an issue to be debated. Within the fiction, Guillaume's temerity is roundly condemned, as much, if not more than, the antifeminism of which he proves himself guilty. But the poem itself testifies to the ways in which Guillaume, as creative source of his works, can forge something entirely new from the givens of tradition, including a different sense in which poetic identity can be represented, taking shape within a series of connected works. The *Behaingne* generates the *Navarre*, which in turn generates the *Lay de Plour*. The audacity here is that Guillaume thematizes the discontents of an author controlled by a disgruntled reader, even as this work by its very existence asserts the power of the poet to exceed the position tradition has assigned him. For here it is Guillaume the *writer* not the *lover* who is the main character.

In the *Lay de Plour*, the speaking voice is a woman bereft by ill fortune of the worthy man to whom she had devoted all her love and attention; in other words, she is a version of the female half of the debating pair from the *Behaingne*. Here, womanly sorrows receive exclusive textual focus;

this emotional turmoil is not compared to the pain suffered by a knight whose lady has played him false, and what she feels is not submitted to any kind of judgment or analysis. No male authority like the king of Bohemia appears in order to advise that she do her best to move beyond this sorrow. Never a character in the full sense, she constitutes no part of a narrative or dramatic movement. Instead, expressed with all the formal intricacy of the most elaborate of fixed form lyrics, these feelings are simply allowed to be. The author's transvestite performance empties his version of female grief of obtrusive maleness even if the lyric ends with a brief, but poignant, mise-en-abîme as the female voice hopes that the lovers will find eternal life in a book. Of course, this is a wish that the lyric's textual factness, its existence within the oeuvre of Guillaume de Machaut, assures has been satisfied in the very moment it is articulated.

But the place of the lyric within the debate series means that it cannot be read simply as itself. The lay not only voices emotion it also serves a rhetorical purpose, and it is the reader's consciousness of this purpose that returns it to a male point of view. As a required literary penance, the *Lay de Plour* asks to be read in terms of its author's required conversion to the correct doctrinal point of view. Here is yet another text generated by a preceding one, in fact, by the two which precede it, since the *Behaingne* furnishes the content to be rewritten. Perhaps even more important, the lyric is called into being by the encounter of the poet with the court. This relationship is restaged within the debate itself. Ironically and appropriately, the lyric penance recalls the first poem in the series; the lady's complaints from the *Behaingne* are transformed from argument into a lyric complaint, which is a transvestite performance whose true speaker is the poet himself, taking seriously the judge's admonition and putting himself in the place of a woman devastated by the premature death of her lover. Here the strident male (and clerical) tones of the narrator's voice from the *Navarre* ventriloquize the sorrows of female experience, but of course, and here is the humor, in an authentically poetic rather than authentically womanly fashion. The feelings evoked in the lyric outburst must be read within the context of the series as evidence of Guillaume's reformation, rather than as the personal product of emotional experience, which is the conventional way in which lyrics are read. Within the fabulized world of the debate series, the lay figures as a bid for artistic reinstatement, with

its feminine point of view asking to be understood as an abandonment of the maleness that had been found doctrinally incorrect as well as disrespectful.

But, just to make the obvious point, all that precedes is in one sense simply pre-text, an elaborate nexus of creative gestures that provide the excuse for Machaut to compose, only supposedly *contre-coeur*, a preciously exquisite example of the most elaborate and difficult fixed form known to his literary culture. If in the opening stanzas of the *Behaingne* the debate series begins with the poet/narrator laying aside his own love sorrow in order to attend to the different forms of misery his betters endure, it ends with a focus on authorship, both fabulized and real, as Guillaume, in his two selves, extra and intratextual, demonstrates his artistry as well as his acceptance (grudging? provisional?) of the condemnation of his betters. If only implicitly, and without an apology for his doctrinal error, the *Lay de Plour* concurs with their judgment, even to the degree that Guillaume effaces (as far as possible at least) the obvious maleness of his poetic voice. And yet with its focus on authorship this conclusion to the debate series is "self" writ large, which is to say that this series of works, linked by the vagaries of the poet's experience in serving his patrons, ends in a way that perfectly exemplifies the narcissistic centripetality of the *dit* as Machaut re-imagined it.

R. Barton Palmer

Note

1. Some of the ideas in this preface were first published in R. Barton Palmer, "Self-Allusion and the Poetics of Metafictionality in Guillaume de Machaut's *Voir dit*," *Citation, Intertextuality and Memory in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Volume 1, Text, Music and Image from Machaut to Ariosto,* ed. Yolanda Plumley, Giuliano Di Bacco, and Stefano Jossa (Exeter: U of Exeter P, 2011), 127.

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Introduction

BURT KIMMELMAN

Several of the essays in this volume pay particular attention to the social or political status of women in their time and place, from within the context of the Machaldian dispensation. Profeminine conversation—indeed, let us call it protofeminist discourse—must inevitably emerge in the late medieval love-debate or *jeu-parti*. The figures typically to be found in the *jeux-partis* require this, arguably, given the women who are involved in the dilemmas these poems illustrate. More subtly, however, and fundamentally, these debates establish an *other* perspective. Considering such alterity, might it be possible to claim that only with the emergence of early feminist discourse in European literature could true fiction come into its own? In Guillaume de Machaut's work and that of his successors, surely, the female character's disappointment at what the fictional Guillaume has wrought within his poems—deftly choreographed by the real-life poet so that his actual oeuvre cannot be ignored—lies at the heart of a dynamic in which something beyond an earlier fabulism, for all its marvelous enchantments, might come into being.

Some of the essays in this book approach this overarching conceptualization of fictionality directly. Specifically, they take up various related aspects of Machaut's legacy, especially as established by his judgment series. The salient features of that legacy include the focus on fame and authorial reputation; and, within this context, there is both the intra- and extratextual *self* to be contemplated, along with the emergence of an *I* possessing ontological fullness. The Machaldian poem manifests a shifted cultural

understanding that comprehended a poetic machinery, one in which the poet (the real Guillaume) and the poet's *I* (his intratextual confection) together modulate the flow of literary, social, and even political power, within the text and sometimes beyond it. The flow is most often realized through the institution of patronage. The dramatizations of the patronage system become integral within a conceptualization of authorship that is nearly modern, not so readily recognizable as medieval. In the work of Machaut and his heirs we find the problematizing of authority, the theatrics of the very notion of *judgment*, the late medieval *dit*'s capacity to leave judgment to its reader, as well as the thought-provoking ambivalence of an un-concluded *jeu-parti*.

Just as Guillaume de Machaut wished readers to be aware of the man as author of the work (in which, often, a poet named Guillaume is to be found), he also wished them to be cognizant of this poet's entire *corpus* (the implications of this term intentional). It may be fair to say that his interest extended to readers and writers who would live long after he had passed away. The synergy of point of view and identity in the judgment series of poems, the individual poems but especially the series as an interconnection that forms a larger oeuvre, provides the ground for the poet's creation of his collected works (for which the occasional poem *Prologue* will be written by him). This is something audacious and new. Like the judgment series, it is something that will cement his reputation.

The essays gathered in this volume represent a further continuation of the series beyond the collection of his work he engineers for himself. The contributions to this present volume in turn address the imaginative achievement Machaut holds up for our contemplation, with present-day scholars joining the community of readers, fictional or otherwise, who have been fashioned by the man Guillaume de Machaut. Quite possibly he hoped for writers to come after him, be they poets or clerks, not only to appreciate his literary prowess but also, in their own ways, to perpetuate his imaginative creations in their own work, lending his literary achievement a dignity beyond that achieved by his own considerable powers of authorship.

That influence, at least in a broad sense, can be seen as having no necessary limits. In "Proust and the Amorous Fountain: Secret Architecture or Suppressed Source?" Camille Naish discusses the possibility of Marcel Proust's connections to Machaut, with the fountain that figures so

centrally in *In Search of Time Lost* understood as a reflex of the eponymous fountain in *La Fonteinne amoureuse*. In R. Barton Palmer's study, "Authorial Second Lives: Machaut, Chaucer, and Philip Roth," the matter at hand involves larger questions of literary history. Nevertheless, the self-regard and shifting of identity within and beyond the text proper, in Roth's novels, leads Palmer back to Machaut whose construction of the inner-outer self can pose, as might be said is a noticeable feature across the postmodernist literary spectrum, the seduction or trap of narcissistic compulsion. A response to certain broad trends within the fictionalizing activity in the late Middle Ages, Machaut's creation of a second self, who straddles the boundary between textuality and the surrounding cultural space jointly inhabited by writer and readers, creates such a possibility.

The other essays in this collection concern themselves exclusively with the literature of the late Middle Ages, taking up aspects of Machaut's influence variously in the late medieval world by tracing his legacy in the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, John Gower, Christine de Pizan, Alain Chartier, Martin Le Franc, as well as the anonymous author of *Le Tresor amoureux*.

The reader of Machaut's judgment series will become aware of the poet's crucial presence within the poems' narratology. This presence is dramatic but also signals thematic, related, matters. The remaining essays in this book situate themselves along two fault lines to be found in the landscape of the *jeu-parti*. These fault lines disclose two qualities of the deep underground. They are indicators of, outside the poem proper, how matters of judgment and authority underwent significant changes in the late Middle Ages.

Lewis Beer's "Polarized Debates, Ambivalent Judgments: The *Jugement Behaigne* and the *Confessio Amantis,*" examines the tension between idealism and pragmatism in Machaut and Gower, whose implications for the love-debate genre are explored. These two works may seem to distinguish themselves from earlier love-debates by "settling" the conflict presented with a conclusive judgment; nevertheless, Beer asserts, they retain the fundamental ambivalence of un-concluded *jeux-partis*. Likewise Douglas Kelly, in "Judgment at Court: Open Thought and Prudent Dissimulation in the Anonymous *Livre du Tresor amoureux,*" suggests that the *dit*'s most original contribution may be that it leaves judgment to its audience and readers. In discussing this almost universally ignored *dit* that

is noteworthy for its original, straightforward treatment of judgment and qualified judges, Kelly notes that the love motif becomes a model for debating and judging larger issues, even as readers are accorded a larger role in their evaluation.

Rosemarie McGerr examines the role of kings as judges in literary mirrors for princes or treatises on the education of rulers, especially in the fourteenth century. In "The Judge as Reader, the Reader as Judge: Literary and Legal Judgment in Dante, Machaut, and Gower" she tracks the evolution of the "mirror" form and argues that a resultant hybridization allowed for new ways of exploring the motivations and measures of royal judgment, including its relationship to divine models of judgment and theories of human perception. The poetic personae of these poets are literally judged within the poems themselves, even as the works figuratively authorize a process of self-judgment for their readers. Literary judgment thus finds itself linked to legal judgment, highlighting the notion of reading as an exercise in moral self-improvement, with the development of good judgment its most important goal.

"True Colors: The Significance of Machaut's and Chaucer's Use of Blue to Represent Fidelity," Elizaveta Strakhov's contribution, examines issues surrounding the legibility of identity as constructed by social reputation. Her essay takes account of contemporary heraldic law treatises that link disputes over heraldic insignia with nascent intellectual property rights as a way of understanding how the two poets focus on the notion of fame. In so doing she shows that color metaphors in their writings figure their own concerns about the ability to have personal control over authorial reputation. Similarly, Helen Swift's "Courting Controversy? Poetic Manipulations of Politics in the Mid-Fifteenth Century" shows how Martin Le Franc's *Le Champion des dames* explores the interactions between literary and political authority in late-medieval France. This work explores in depth the tradition refounded by Machaut and taken up by other writers of the period like Alain Chartier, including, as Swift argues, the intermingling or amalgamation of poetic and political authority. Somewhat alike, "Bohemian Gower: *Confessio Amantis*, Queen Anne, and Machaut's Judgment Poems," by Linda Burke, analyzes Gower's adaptations of the *dits amoureux* of Machaut and his followers. She maintains that this choice of genre was ideally suited for an appeal to a particularly powerful female reader, as suggested by late medieval profeminine discourse. In focusing

on the relationship between the *Confessio* and Machaut's judgment poems, as well as Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, Burke takes into account this discourse in general in this period, and points out the possible respective roles played by Anne of Bohemia in the creation of these poems.

In "'Le Contraire Effacies': Challenging Literary and Political Authority in Guillaume de Machaut, Alain Chartier, and Medieval French Debate Poetry," Emma Cayley also focuses on Chartier, especially his self-positioning within the Machaldian tradition. Cayley examines literary and political authority in his writings as well as in a number of subsequent fifteenth-century poetic debates. The culture of literary, political, and intellectual debate, filtered through the works of Machaut and Christine de Pizan, constitutes the backdrop for Chartier's literary debates. Burt Kimmelman also argues for the centrality of this nexus of literary and political authority. His essay "The Machaut Map: Geoffrey Chaucer, Christine de Pizan, the Diegetic Self, and Pre-Renaissance Individualism in Northern Europe" analyzes the Machaldian legacy in the oeuvres of Geoffrey and Christine. Guillaume, he argues, understood his poetry as cultural capital. And this conception of the writer's function decisively shaped the practice of text-making for poets of the next generation, as a series of sociopolitical acts that are not meant to be understood in strictly aesthetic terms. The status of the patron is not diminished by such textualizations, so Kimmelman asserts. But the poet is elevated through composition that engages the political as well as the literary.

Machaut invented gestures of self-fashioning that were widely imitated, freeing fabulation from its dependence on preexisting *matières* and making possible a fictionalization of the self whose effect can be seen in not only a modernist preoccupation with authorial experience but also in postmodernist games-playing, in precisely the forms of metafictionality that contest a too easy separation of art from life. Machaut, in short, deserves to be remembered not merely for his astonishing range and the enormity of his creative production, a virtuosity none of his contemporaries come close to matching. He also made possible future forms of the novelistic in which an author and individual who could be fully acknowledged, tacitly understood and accepted, would emerge, a literary development traced by Palmer at some length.

The question of agency for the actual flesh-and-blood Guillaume de Machaut is arguably a sine qua non. The need for and the consequent

act of judgment was a literary topos that Machaut revived and renewed. Furnishing a fictional framework in which the institutionalized roles of literary production and reception could be dramatized, the Machaut judgment poems played a pivotal role in the emergence of what became the novel from earlier forms of fabulizing that had occulted the author's presence and ignored the social process of reading/evaluation. The most characteristic and honored forms of late medieval fictionalizing are inconceivable without this formal and thematic breakthrough. The different essays collected in this volume attest that fact.

I

POLITICAL AND LITERARY AUTHORITIES

The Place of Judgment

1

Judgment at Court

Open Thought and Prudent Dissimulation in the Anonymous *Livre du Tresor amoureux*

DOUGLAS KELLY

In the wake of Guillaume de Machaut's major contributions to the generic specification of the late medieval French *dit* (see Cerquiglini and Léonard), I have been investigating features of the Machaldian *dit* that later authors imitated, emulated, and revised. These include formal features of his art of poetry (Jacqueline Cerquiglini's *montage*) and contextual material that informs the articulation of his art of love. Debate is a major mode in his *dits* and in lyric clusters that engage various voices male and female at different stages in diverse *gradus amoris*. Judgment is a major consideration in debate, as exemplified, notably, in Machaut's *Jugement dou roy de Behaigne* and the radical revision of the *Behaigne*'s form, content, and judgment in his subsequent *Jugement dou roy de Navarre*.[1] However, judgment can also go unsaid after being referred to a patron or a more or less closely defined audience. This occurs in the *Tresor amoureux*.

One of the truly original adaptations of the Machaldian *dit* is found in the anonymous *Tresor amoureux*.[2] Although this *dit* has received very little critical attention since the publication of its edition in the nineteenth century, it offers interesting new approaches to and perspectives on medieval debate and judgment *dits*. The poem, staged as a dream vision, moves back and forth between a conventional love context and broader, more controversial issues of its time: in a lengthy discussion/debate between

the narrator and a squire, the *dit* takes up many issues, beginning with love but going well beyond that and, in fact, subordinating its love debate to broader issues such as arms, honor, government, and morality. Judgment on the *Tresor*'s debates is left to the *dit*'s audiences and, more precisely, readers.[3] Here I examine the role assigned to these potential readers in evaluating this *dit*'s love motif as well as the larger issues it raises for reader judgment. I examine, therefore, the *Tresor*'s multiple references to reader-judges, the kinds of readers anticipated by the anonymous author as well as by figures in the *dit* who actually express opinions and judgments, notably the narrator and the squire, but also the personifications Amour and Connaissance,[4] and how their similarities and differences define the issues that both unite and divide these two sets of disputants and, more important, potential readers and their judgments.

The *Tresor amoureux* begins when the author/narrator decides to write the *dit* in order to record and recall what transpires in a dream (55.90–113).[5] When Connaissance learns of the narrator's intention, she immediately provides him with a lengthy explanation of what he observes (56–64). He next encounters Amour, or the god of love, who heartily approves of his project to write a dream memoire, provided he conform his account to the god's will (68.506–16). More specifically, "Mettre te fault ton estudie / A faire un livre bel et gent / Pour conforter toute no gent" ("You must apply yourself to composing a fine and noble book that brings comfort to our entire host"; 74.712–14)—that is, to lovers who serve Amour. Amour then prescribes the *montage* of the *dit* as he wants the narrator to arrange it: rhyming couplets in four segments are to alternate with ballades in three segments (75–76.734–76);[6] further on, the god of love oversees the designation of the narrator as "Greffier du Tresor amoureux" (206.2265), or Record Keeper of the Treasury of Love at the castle Beauté (61.271) where the lady he loves resides. The castle signifies

> Le temps de la vie presente
> Et ceulz aussi qui ont vouloir
> En tous estas de mieulz valoir
> Et de monter en hault degré. (60.266–69)

> (The present life and those on all levels of society as well as those who wish to become worthier and to rise to higher status.)

The narrator's authorship becomes in this way an official function in service to the god of love and the lady he loves (208.2313–17). At the end of the *dit*, controversy erupts between Connaissance and Amour after Amour faults the composition of the poem. He is especially offended by the role of Raison and the corrections she proposes to the *dit*. This is because the narrator reports Connaissance's opinion that Amour has done nothing of lasting value (243.31.25–30), but that the lover can improve on that with Raison's help (243–48). Amour argues that Raison has been given too much authority; she can, notably, even make one stop loving (262.2626–28). The god punishes the narrator by dismissing him as *greffier* (272.2944–48), thus effectively judging the *Tresor* unacceptable and the narrator's love unworthy.

Shortly thereafter, Amour and Connaissance agree to submit their differences to "tous ceulz qui orront ce livre / Et qui le verront a delivre" ("all those who will hear this book read and for whom it is readily available [for reading]"; 275.3043–60). Connaissance is confident that these reader-judges will identify accurately the specific arguments advanced and thereby bring the dispute to a peaceful solution (275–76.3117–24). This, as it were, seemingly "democratic" judgment on the *dit*'s debates may well have surprised in late fourteenth-century French courts. It is problematic, too, when debate arises in the *Tresor* because of the disputes among its principal protagonists: the narrator and squire throughout most of the *dit*, Amour and Connaissance after they read it in the poem's final part. To complicate matters further, both personifications name partisan-readers whom they rely on to support their respective claims. In effect, the *dit* anticipates antithetical judgments and, therefore, a certain polarization among readers. Lovers will support Amour whereas those who side with Connaissance will rally to the defense of her sisters Raison, Loyauté, and Souffisance ("Competence") (identified 58.172–75). Amour, too, is allied with Nature, according to Connaissance, a mother figure in the *dit*'s amorous context, "Qui l'a nourri [that is, Amour] comme sa mere" ("Who has nourished him as a mother would"; 59.230–31). But before exploring this diversity we must consider the scope of the debates raised in the *dit* and, more specifically, the likelihood of the diverse judgments the two personifications expect to result among the *dit*'s multiple readers.

The court milieu for contemporary discussion looms large in the time the *Tresor amoureux* was composed (Taylor, *Making of Poetry*). For

example, Jean Froissart relates the social setting in Orthez when he read *Meliador* to Gaston de Foix and those in the count's court there (Bouchet 182–87). Two features stand out. First, absolute silence prevailed during the poet's serial readings of his romance (Froissart, *Chroniques* 174). Second, Gaston's summary evaluation of the romance narrative was laudatory: a beautiful work the poet can be proud of. "C'est uns beaus mestiers, / Beaus maistres, de faire telz choses" ("It's a fine trade, fair master, to write such works"; Froissart, *Florin* 298–99).[7] Of course, whatever praise Gaston de Foix expressed is tempered in Froissart's mind by the fact that the count did not purchase the manuscript of the romance the poet read from, although he did give him eighty florins for his reading (payment that Froissart claims was stolen from him in the *Dit du florin*, 269–417). To be sure, on occasion Gaston de Foix disputed specific features of the romance "quant il cheoit aucune chose où il vouloit mettre debat ou arguement, trop volontiers en parloit à moy" ("whenever there arose a topic about which he wanted to debate or argue he spoke to me about it quite freely"; *Chroniques* 174). What these topics were Froissart does not tell us, although the dialogue and debate between squire and narrator in the *Tresor amoureux* might illustrate the kind of discussion Froissart had with Gaston de Foix. Moreover, the poet reports no judgment of or even reaction to the romance from the court's silent audience. Indeed, the audience was expected to remain silent. The count is obviously not interested in what his entourage may think, nor is Froissart.

However, the *Meliador* itself does contain a fictional, intradiegetic judgment of one of its inserted lyrics. A maiden rejects a conventional rondeau about love because she does not love in the way the poem depicts: "Ceste parole n'est pas mienne, / Car onques n'aimai par tel art" ("I do not identify with those words for I never loved in conformity with that art"; Froissart, *Meliador* 20353–54; cf. Kelly, *Medieval Imagination* 248–52). The poem the maiden rejects is not by Froissart. It was written, like the other inserted lyrics in the romance, by one of Froissart's patrons, Wenceslas de Brabant (*Chroniques* 173–74). Curiously, the rondeau contains a woman's voice assuring her beloved that she has given him her heart forever more. The audience's silence during Froissart's reading of his romance is, therefore, virtually broken by the *Meliador* maiden's voice. She rejects the otherwise well-written poem by an author on Gaston de Foix's social level. Does she, therefore, reject faithful love?

Important here, the depiction of her reaction to the poem suggests both diversity of opinion and social hierarchy not unlike that anticipated in the *Tresor amoureux*. Indeed, could Gaston's failure to purchase the manuscript Froissart read from indicate in some way agreement with the maiden who rejects Wenceslas de Brabant's art of love? Yet, one might wonder whether she would even have been at liberty to express her reservations at Gaston's court, as only the count himself does regarding different points in the romance. The silence of the court's audience suggests that her opinion and even her voice would have been disallowed. Moreover, as a woman, might she not also have been silenced by male opinions of women's intelligence or knowledge? In the *Cité des dames*,[8] Christine de Pizan protests against such widespread "vituperes de fames et de leurs condicions" ("slander about women and their status in society"; 42). The authority that she condemns is that of the endoxon (Kelly, *Changing Opinion* 78–82), a distinguished, authoritative group to which Gaston de Foix belongs by virtue of his nobility, as does Wenceslas de Brabant, and by his role as poet like Wenceslas de Brabant.

The hoary concept of the endoxon begins with Aristotle. The notion survived into the late Middle Ages and beyond as a standard for authoritative judgment (Ueding, Kalivoda, and Robling, *Historisches Wörterbuch* 2.1134–38; Moos, "Sens" 16–23). Endoxon refers to statements that seem to be true to all men or to the majority of them or to the wise men among them, whether including all wise men, or most of them, or the best known and most famous. Over time, a growing identification of the wise with the educated tends to adapt the notion of the endoxon to contemporary clerical and court members. It includes the most learned (Moos, *Geschichte* 299–309 passim), a smaller group, no doubt, but one likely to favor Reason and Connaissance more than Amour in evaluating the *Tresor amoureux*. For her part, Christine rejects such authorities' misogyny. She makes her point in the *Cité des dames*: misogyny corresponds to the views of "tant de si renommez hommes, si sollempnelz clercs de tant hault et grant entendement, si clairvoyans en toutes choses comme il semble que ceulx fussent" ("so many renowned men, serious clerics of such high and wide understanding, so perceptive in matters as they seem to have been"; 42). How, she wonders, could such men have erred? To Christine's mind, their ignorance stems from the fact that they were not women. Therefore, they could not judge with authority what transpires in

women's minds because they do not and cannot share the experience of women. They can learn what women know only by heeding what they say or write, not by silencing them as Gaston de Foix might have silenced the *Meliador* maiden.

The *Tresor* narrator makes the same case as Christine against the endoxon's misogyny. This occurs when a man turns against love and all women because one woman spurns him (177–78.31); Aristotle and Vergil also figure among the alleged victims of "meurs femenins" (176.30.1–20). Such sentiments, the narrator affirms, are hardly those of a noble heart.

> Mais il n'a pas le cuer nobile,
> Ains est aux dames mauvoisins,
> Qui leur porte à champ ou à ville
> Tel los. (176.30.21–24)

> (He does not have a noble heart; rather he is a misogynist neighbor who blames ladies in this way in town or country.)

Such a man fails to recognize that women have a will as free as men do: they can reject a suitor if they want to. "Amours ne dames vraiement / N'ont en ce cas nulle desserte / De reprouche" ("in truth neither Love nor ladies deserve reproach in this case"; 177.31.22–24). Like Christine, the *Tresor*'s narrator claims that the endoxon's misogyny is wrong: "li sage n'y voient goute" ("the wise men are as blind as a bat on this topic"; 178–79.32, refrain).

Thus, the emergence of personal experience and knowledge that Christine exemplifies vis-à-vis established authorities achieve even earlier critical importance in the *Tresor amoureux*. Some of Christine's "sollempnelz clercs" were martyred for voicing criticism of authority, a route the *Tresor* advises its readers not to follow. I return to this issue below. What is important here is the identification of readers recognized as valid judges of the issues raised in the *Tresor amoureux* and elsewhere in late medieval French literature as well as the emergence of voices—those of Christine, the *Meliador* maiden, and the *Tresor*'s narrator—that question time-honored authorities. Accordingly, in the *Tresor* Amour and Connaissance differ not only as to the number of readers who will side with them in their debate but also, in the context of the endoxon, as to the authority of each reader's opinion when proceeding to judgment (278–79.3116–35).

The *Meliador* maiden's personal response to Wenceslas's love poem—she loves in a different, presumably less noble way—becomes paradigmatic, not because everyone would agree with her (Wenceslas and, presumably, Froissart did not) but because of human diversity. In the *Tresor amoureux*, the disagreement between Amour and Connaissance turns not only on the importance of love as a generally acceptable human good but also on the existence of diverse kinds of love. The *dit*'s readers are to judge the issues the poem raises, although bias may well occur just as some readers' judgments may be deemed (by other readers, for example) more authoritative than theirs, thereby making the very context of the endoxon both significant and problematic. The quandary is even taken for granted, since, as each personification admits, lovers will side with the god of love while rational, loyal, and *souffisant* ("competent") minds will favor Connaissance's evaluation of love as well as the broader social and moral contexts the *dit* introduces on arms, honor, and morality. Let us, therefore, look more closely at the different kinds of lovers and more generally human types that the *Tresor amoureux* projects as potential reader-judges of the *dit*. Since the anonymous author does not say specifically which kind of judges he has in mind or favors, readers must identify the issues the *dit* raises and submits to audience judgment for clues as to which kind of readers may qualify as being subtle enough to give authoritative judgments in the court milieu.

The *Tresor* has in mind a large, albeit critical audience of those, as Amour puts it,

> qui ce livre liront,
> Qui bien justement esliront
> Les arguemens hault et bas
> Pour appaisier tous les debas. (278.3121–24)

> (who will read this book and will accurately discern its arguments high and low in order to settle all its debates.)

Amour is convinced not only that all lovers who read the *dit* will side with him; he also foresees having a hundred supporters for every one of Connaissance's (279.3125–30). This may be so. But Connaissance believes that those who truly know her and her three sisters, Raison, Souffisance, and Loyauté, will side with her. Plurality in numbers here confronts the voice

of the truly rational, a traditional endoxon that may also constitute a numerical minority, albeit one traditionally more authoritative in the rhetorical court context. In any case, both Amour and Connaissance agree that the one who receives the greater number of supporters will win the debate, shaking hands in agreement with such a loud clap that it awakens the *Tresor*'s narrator and abruptly terminates his dream (279.3144–51).

The central debate in the *Tresor* is between the author figure and a squire. The issues they confront, delve into in most of the *dit* (83–240), and deliver to their potential reading public are enunciated in seven queries (276–78.3061–104; queries in English cited from Kelly, *Medieval Imagination* 119; see also Scheler lx–lxi). The first two adumbrate a moral and social hierarchy in which love and knighthood are compared and contrasted.

> Is it preferable to attain honor and fame in arms or in love? (3064–69)
> To live in constant joy, is it preferable to serve love faithfully or to follow arms with honor? (3070–74)

The court and its moral implications vis-à-vis clerical milieus are at issue in the third query.

> Is it preferable to have knowledge together with a good conscience or good fortune in the uncertain life at court? (3075–80)[9]

Returning to the original debate on arms and love mentioned in queries one and two, the fourth query suggests a synthesis that conjoins the two noble activities.

> Can there be anyone so well born that he could honorably follow both arms and love? (3081–86)

The fifth issue undermines this incipient idealism by focusing on love's uncertainties.

> Why is Love more successful in pursuing one person than a hundred others under his dominion? (3087–90)

The issue is all the more interesting in the light of Amour's certainty that his lovers outnumber Connaissance's supporters a hundred to one. Does that mean that ninety-nine of those lovers are unhappy in love (like the

squire)? Moreover, if happy lovers are extremely rare, must not the experience of love be widely diverse? This issue opens to a broader context in the last two questions in which Amour's maternal companion, Nature, is herself deemed unreliable: nobility itself becomes as uncertain as love.

> How can Nature allow a child of noble character to become ill bred? (3091–96)
> Why, of all the children born of the same father and mother, does one child surpass all his siblings in honorable conduct? (3097–104)

The *Tresor* does not provide definitive answers to these questions although possible answers arise from sometimes sharp altercations between the *dit*'s interlocutors—the narrator and the squire on the one hand, Amour and Connaissance on the other.

Let us return to the author figure's intention in writing the *Tresor amoureux*: he decides to put his dream into writing so as better to recall it.

> Il me vint en advision
> Que je l'escrisoie en un livre
> Pour en avoir mieulx à delivre
> Remenissance ou retentive
> Par memoire ymaginative. (55.90–94)[10]

> (It occurred to me during my vision that I would write it down in a book in order to remember and hold it more firmly as an image in my memory.)

The decision is seconded by Connaissance who contributes information regarding the setting the author finds himself in (57.150–52). As noted above, shortly thereafter Amour adds his support to the narrator's poetic endeavor (68.500–13) and, subsequently, tells him in detail how to compose the *dit* (74–76.712–76). This cooperative, even amicable beginning seems promising. However, when, toward the end of the *dit*, both personifications return to evaluate what the narrator has written up to that point in time, the sharp differences of opinion noted above emerge: Connaissance approves of the poem (242–43.30.21–25 and 31), but Amour does not (259–63.2540–656). Their altercation leads to the seven queries recorded above requiring answers and the decision to submit the dispute and the decision as to which responses are acceptable to the *dit*'s

readers—that is, to all those who will read the *Tresor amoureux* or hear it read. By their answers they are to settle the dispute between Amour and Connaissance and the meaning of love and honor in the "temps de la vie presente," that is, while the squire and narrator are in love.

The *dit*'s projected audience of readers is wide and wide-ranging, extending from the *sages* to the *lours* ("wise [and] dim-witted"; 59.224) as well as, more generally, from the perfect to the imperfect (133.1193–94). At the beginning, with the approval of both Amour and Connaissance, the narrator expresses his desire that "toutes gens d'onneur m'en sachent gré" ("All honorable persons be grateful to me for it"; 78–79.2, refrain), that is, for having written the *dit*, in effect excluding those with any dishonorable imperfections. He is also prepared to accept the opinions of all those who read his ballades and who have known love: "J'acorde ce qu'ilz en diront" ("I agree with what they will say about it"; 119–20.42, refrain). The squire agrees with him except that, like Connaissance, his ideal readers are not only lovers but also those who have achieved great renown in arms (120.42.24). At issue is whether love is a sufficient source of honor, or whether it is better to go abroad and, by deeds of prowess, win the affection of the beloved in honorable combat. In any case, the narrator opines that readers will discuss these issues, evaluating the relative worth of love and knighthood, including those readers who have experience of both love and armed conflict (136.1291–308). We observe here issues raised by queries one, two, and four as sources of diverse opinions among honorable readers even though they are all presumed to be subtle enough to weigh accurately and evaluate coherently the arguments and conclusions the issues give rise to (138.1368–73). These readers constitute the *Tresor*'s endoxon.

However, although both Amour and Connaissance agree to seek readers' opinions, this does not mean that there will be general agreement. The diverse topics of debate between narrator and squire, and a fortiori between Amour and Connaissance, point to gridlock. The narrator, a lover in service as his lady's *greffier*, argues for love, whereas the squire, an unhappy lover, favors arms and, therefore, exemplifies those who have experience in both honorable activities suggested by query four. The absence of agreement is inevitable, we are told, because God and Nature have made diverse human beings. Indeed, as the squire puts it,

car entre chascune figure
Faite de Dieu et de Nature, say
Differences, et ainsi je figure
Qu'amours aussi en cuer de creature
Se puet très bien differer. (168.22.30–34)

(for I know differences among each type God and Nature fashioned, according to which I conclude that love in the heart of anyone God created may vary remarkably from one person to another.)

Like the *Meliador* maiden, the squire and the narrator exemplify this distinction. The squire goes so far as to claim that there are as many kinds of love and lovers as there are human beings in the world (164–65.20.9–18). How, then, can judgment lead to consensus in such a chaotic world populated by so many different people? Indeed, the squire opines that there can be "nul amoureux jugement / Juste et loyal" because, when all is said and done, "homs n'en puet proprement / Parler au vray que de son sentement" ("no judgment in matters of love that is just and true [and] one can properly speak the truth only about one's own feelings"; 165.20.20–23). Although this may seem to uphold Christine de Pizan's opinion that only women can judge what women are, do, and think, it also leaves open the possibility of important disagreements among women regarding their experiences, character, and opinions on the good life at court. For example, unlike Christine de Pizan, the *Meliador* maiden seems to reject the constant love depicted in Wenceslas's otherwise well-written poem.

For his part, the squire singles out for special mention the importance of "subtle" minds when resolving disputes (168.22.34–35). He also notes equivalencies within his distinctions. He groups humans among their *semblables* by advising lovers to love those that are like them: "Amours en tous estas / Ne quiert que son pareil" ("Love in all social settings seeks only its own kind"; 172.26.1–2). The squire gathers humans into subgroups of lovers who are otherwise alike; the narrator, too, notes the diverse groups of lovers as social, even moral types. Likes, not opposites attract and, indeed, they should attract. "Chascun ameroit son semblable" ("Each person would love the one who resembles him or her"; 180–81.34, refrain). Such similarity also takes account of social, moral, and intellectual groups. For example, "Un roy n'ameroit que roïne, / Un prince

ameroit princesse / Et un duc une duchesse" ("A king would love only a queen, a prince a princess, and a duke a duchess"; 180.34.11–13,), and so on down the aristocratic hierarchy. The count would love a countess, the viscount a viscountess, the handsome knight a beautiful lady, the squire a damsel, and the honorable man an honorable woman. In another stanza, choices of dubious morality emerge when Jaques loves Jaquemine (peasant love?), the abbot an abbess, and the Dominican friar a Beguine nun; the same holds for both sexes whether they are flatterers, boasters, virgins, or shepherds: quite a mix (if not a hodgepodge) not only of social groups but also of distinct individuals who, it is important to note, conform to a human type, not to a singular individual.[11]

Given this diversity, the squire believes that no rules can dictate conduct and sentiment for love or any other human activity or emotion. As he puts it,

> On ne porroit par sens ne par mesure
> Mettre en amours rieule, point ne mesure,
> Pour ce qu'amours à son gré se depart
> En pluseurs lieus et que il s'en depart
> Quant il en a administracion.[12] (167.22.12–16)

> (No one could use wit or measure to establish a rule, category, or mean in love, for love willfully spreads about in different places, and leaves them too when he is in charge of it.)

Indeed, such subtle distinctions introduce a wide diversity of judges into the horizontal cross-section of humanity that extends from the wise to the dim-witted and from the perfect to the imperfect. The superiority of the subtle, according to the scribe, suggests that among the multiple readers of the *Tresor* some are better and more authoritative because they are subtle. These judges will identify the most honorable love as that which conforms to the social hierarchy the varieties of lovers exemplify (168.22.29–38; 169–70.24). This reopens the door to the medieval endoxon.

What characterizes the subtle and, therefore, superior judge? While implicitly allowing for diversity among judges as among other groups, the narrator gives some advice on how to identify the best ones. Like the best

lovers, they should be honorable. "Prenez juge qui soit de noble affaire, / Sage, courtois qui ait sentu le trait / Que bon Amour scet aux vrais amans traire" ("Choose a judge who is noble, wise, knowledgeable at court, as well as one who has felt the arrow that good Love knows how to let fly at true lovers"; 99.23.19–21). As the narrator sums it up in concluding the *Tresor*, we find these attributes clearly set out in an address to his noble audience.

> A tous nobles d'entendement,
> Qui par bon et vray sentement
> Sont des hons de philosophie,
> Humblement je leur signifie
> Que je les suppli de cuer tendre
> Qu'à mon livre veuillent entendre.
> (280–81.3181–86; line 3183 cf. Kelly, *Machaut* 261–62.)

> (To all noblemen who have understanding and who, with valid experience, are men with philosophical intelligence, I humbly tell them and beseech in all sincerity to apply themselves willingly to reading my book.)

We perceive here a judge not unlike those in Machaut's two judgment *dits*, Jean de Bohème and Charles de Navarre, or Gaston de Foix and Wenceslas de Brabant in Froissart's *dits* (but no women[13]). They also anticipate Christine de Pizan's conception of endoxon as composed of those who are knowledgeable thanks to reason and personal experience. The *Tresor*'s judges should be noble, wise, and learned—at least, that is how Machaut, Froissart, and Christine depict them. They, presumably, have felt Amour's arrow and can, therefore, speak from experience about love. But can they still speak with authority? The *Meliador* maiden suggests that they may well have limitations, given her rejection of Wenceslas de Brabant's depiction of constant love. The difference between this maiden's kind of love and that which Wenceslas depicts may well be understood as between a man and a woman in love who confront their different opinions and experiences of love. Yet individual experience may well be rejected by those of the same gender, virtually opposing the *Meliador* maiden and Christine de Pizan on constancy in love, implicitly likening the former to the

unfaithful women who defend free love in the *Cent Ballades* attributed to Jean le Sénéchal (Kelly, *Medieval Imagination* 186; Taylor, "Inescapable Rose.")

The wide diversity of experiences of those from whom Amour and Connaissance expect approval is certainly one way of looking at the opinions of the *Meliador* maiden and of Christine de Pizan in the *Cité des dames*. But fourteenth- and fifteenth-century France is not a democracy even in fictional representations nor is the Revolution looming. France is a kingdom governed by a king in which, on various levels, the nobility and the Church exercise their own authority or *dangier* that commonly connotes the aristocratic prerogatives of power and dominion (Kelly, *Fictio* 94–96; cf. also *Tresor* 332).[14] The kings of Bohemia and of Navarre as well as Gaston de Foix belong to this realm in part because they occupy high status in its social hierarchy.

Late-medieval France is also a Christian nation. Therefore, thought may be subject to ecclesiastical validation: *nihil obstat* and *imprimatur* are in force. The anonymous author is writing for readers who are witnesses to both feudal and family rivalries in the kingdom (139–41.1380–564) and a schismatic Church (252–53.41.17–42.10; cf. 303n251, 17); they may even have suffered, as lovers do, because of those conflicts. Here we encounter a formidable impediment to and grave danger in the free expression of one's opinion, one that poses a threat even to the most elevated figures in France in times of war, the inquisition, schism, and violent aristocratic rivalries like that, for example, between the houses of Orléans and Bourgogne.

Connaissance is eager to discover the truth about "moralité" and in "hystore" by using her profound knowledge of the "ordenance de ce monde" (251–52.41.1–10). Given the times, this is dangerous territory for lay readers who evaluate openly whatever truths they may choose, especially when they do not accord with other readers any more than Connaissance and Amour agree with one another. Connaissance claims that there are two major points readers should consider when seeking answers to the seven queries discussed above and then judging the validity of the answers they give. First, one should not dare to correct openly faults in others even if one may be subtle enough to condemn them justly, rationally, and convincingly. As Connaissance counsels the narrator,

Advise toi que par deux poins, beaulz filz,
D'autrui blasmer ne te dois mettre en paine:
Le premier est que tu n'es pas soutilz
Pour corrigier creature non saine;
Et le secont, que cil en vain se paine
Ne n'est dignes d'autrui manifester
D'aucun vice qu'on voit en li regner;
Par ces poins cy humaine creature
Ne doit vouloir autrui vituperer. (253–54.43.1–9)[15]

(Consider, fair son, that for two reasons you must not strive to blame another person. The first is that you are not subtle enough to correct another person's faults. The second is that one strives to do so in vain; no one is worthy enough to reveal any vice perceived as reigning over another person. For these reasons no human being must want to blame another human being.)

The source of Connaissance's opinion is biblical: the adulteress whom a crowd is about to stone to death until Christ intervenes, calling upon each of her accusers to cast the first stone only if he is himself without fault (254.43.11–20). No stone is cast. It follows in such cases that one must silence personal opinion. The moral: "me fault souvent dissimuler" ("I must often conceal my opinion"; 99.23.19–21) means not casting a stone when judging the conduct of others. This is prudent dissimulation. If it does not eradicate opinion in judgment, it certainly silences it.

This applies not only to critical evaluation of another person but also to matters that the high clergy alone are deemed competent to judge. These learned men are distinct from those who are *letré* and, therefore, according to Connaissance, qualified to speak on the issues the *Tresor amoureux* raises in the seven queries as well as on the altercation between her and Amour. As Connaissance puts it in response to Amour's charge that she has misled the narrator, "je ne lui ay administré / Conseil que tout li plus letré / Ne desissent bien que j'ay droit" ("I have proffered no advice to him except that which even the best educated would indeed say that I have the right to give"; 265.2719–21). Indeed, clerical issues are, potentially, matters of life, death, and the afterlife. This is because defense of truth as the individual perceives it may well lead to martyrdom in the

name of that truth. Such engagement may befit "chascun sage clerc" who "s'abandonne / Pour verité dignement conjoïr" ("Each knowledgeable cleric [who] exposes himself to death in order to welcome truth in a dignified manner"; 255.44.21–22); here, as with personal indictments, the lay reader does better telling him- or herself simply to "Dissimuler qu'à me bouter en tence / Ne me laissier batre ne affoler" ("Conceal my opinion rather than thrust myself into conflict or submit to being beaten or mutilated"; 255.44.27–28). Connaissance's concern is self-preservation in times that are decidedly not "democratic" in resolving issues of faith and government, or in social disputes and rivalries. Although dissimulation is prudent, it does not require closing one's mind to individual truths; it means keeping silent. Prudent dissimulation protects both body and soul. Even if one does cast the first stone, martyrdom may not save the soul. Prudent dissimulation may save the body if violent hatred or envy enflames one's opponents. Hence Connaissance's advice: "Mieulz me vault taire" ("I do better to say nothing"; 257.2445). As with those at Gaston de Foix's court listening to *Meliador*, silence is golden.

Connaissance's views on the limits and constraints of social debate at the time the *Tresor amoureux* was written are revealing about the judgment of court audiences and private readers. The implied judges are numerous and diverse readers; they do not constitute a judiciary or a clerical endoxon. In the court context, they belong to an audience of aristocratic readers presumed to be of diverse views on life and the "ordenance de ce monde." Speaking out must be guarded: the opinion about love in private conversations like that leading to the *Meliador* maiden's rejection of a certain kind of love is not appropriate when at the court of a Gaston de Foix. Some opinions are out of place before ecclesiastical authorities, even if it means choosing between schismatic popes; questioning authoritative opinion represented by the endoxon must await Christine de Pizan, a variety of the "*Meliador* maiden" who dared to question misogyny—and even she did so in the strictly moral context of the *Cité des dames*, not in that of an honorable love that she rejected as impracticable, given the "ordenance de ce monde."

Notes

1. Kelly, *Machaut* 193–203, with additional bibliography.

2. Kelly, *Medieval Imagination* 114–20; Strubel 180–81, 215–16 passim. This late fourteenth-century *Dit* has been ascribed to Froissart; however, the attribution is no longer accepted. Cf. Scheler lx–lxvii; Nuß 5–6, 34–77. On the possibility that the author was a cleric named "maistre Lucas," see Kelly, *Machaut* 233n48; on his clerical features, see Nuß 41–42.

3. On the "didactic character of late medieval poetry," see now Armstrong and Kay (quote, p. 4).

4. The narrator's beloved is also involved as "juge et partie" (101–02.25) in the *dit*'s *gradus amoris*. However, the *Tresor*'s anonymous author does not develop this potential line of argument by confronting the suitor and his lady directly.

5. Because of the complex formal structure of this edition, I refer to both page and, where appropriate, line numbers (55.90–113 = p. 55, lines 90–113) or to page before ballade number plus line numbers (for example, 243.31.25–30 = p. 243, ballade 31, lines 25–30).

6. On this seven-part *montage*, see *Tresor* 290n75: 739–55, Nuß 39–41, and my *Machaut* 236.

7. Gaston de Foix was not only a nobleman but also a poet who, in Froissart's words, "d'armes et d'amours volentiers se desduisoit" ("enjoyed discussing about arms and love"; *Chroniques* 175) and "prenoit grant esbatement en menestraudie, car bien s'i congnoissoit" ("he enjoyed immensely musical and poetic entertainment for he knew these arts well"; *Chroniques* 176; cf. 176–77n6). Gaston's place among contemporary poets was, therefore, justified. On these matters, see Ainsworth 490–91, and many of the contributions to Fasseur's *Froissart à la cour de Béarn* (with additional bibliography).

8. I use the French title for references to the edition published in Italy entitled *Città delle dame*.

9. Jean Renart mounts vigorous defenses of good fortune or, more precisely, good luck in his two romances and his *Lai de l'ombre*.

10. "Memoire ymaginative" sets before the mind's eye the worth and beauty of the lady "Dont j'ai imaginacion / En mon cuer par impression / Si emprainte" ("whose image as I perceive her I have so deeply impressed in my heart"; 129.1043–45); see also 56.131–38, 76.782–894, 127.980–84, and 144–45.1581–91.

11. For the relation between singularity and exemplarity in some medieval poetry, see Kelly, *Machaut* 174–79.

12. Amour's leave-taking occurs after Amour criticizes the *Tresor*'s narrator and terminates his role as his lady's *greffier*.

13. By contrast, Christine chooses the Queen, Isabeau de Bavière, to judge the debate on the *Roman de la rose* (*Débat* 5–6).

14. As a personification, Dangier is depicted both in the *Tresor* and in the *Roman de la rose*, as villainous: "le fel adversier" ("the wicked adversary"; 62.314) and "le plus parfait / Vilain, et tout le plus rustique" ("the consummate villain and by far the most churlish"; 199.2022–23). But, under Amour's aegis he can change for the better (183.37.10–18); on Amour's *dangier* in the *Tresor*, cf. 262.2615–25.

15. As noted above, this is the vice or prejudice Christine claims to be widespread in the endoxon that medieval women confronted in her time.

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2

"Le Contraire Effacies"

Challenging Literary and Political Authority in Guillaume de Machaut, Alain Chartier, and Medieval French Debate Poetry

EMMA CAYLEY

This essay will address questions of literary and political authority in the writings of two of medieval France's best known authors, Alain Chartier (c. 1385–1430) and Guillaume de Machaut (1300–77). Chartier was steeped in a rich culture of literary, political, and intellectual debate, partly inherited from his predecessors Machaut and Christine de Pizan.[1] His literary debates are certainly heavily inflected by Machaut's *jugement* poems.[2] My focus in this chapter is on how Machaut, and later Chartier, position themselves conceptually and materially within the literary tradition as authorities (both in terms of form and content).[3] I discuss how Chartier and Machaut's positioning within the tradition of the reception of their works marks them as authority figures, or "sites" of authority, and how that authority is paradoxically reinforced by textual and material attempts to erase it. We recall Avis's (Discretion) exhortation to the king of Navarre, appointed judge of Machaut's *Jugement dou Roy de Navarre* (1349), that he should "le contraire effacies" ("erase the opposite"; 3432), or in other words perhaps: spin the debate to give the desired outcome.[4]

I examine here in particular how the verb *effacer,* used in the title quotation from the *Navarre* and liberally throughout Machaut and Chartier's textual production, refers us to an effacing or defacing of literary and

political authority, and reversal of judgment. This is a deletion that is always threatened in Machaut and later in Chartier's oeuvre, both in text and in image as we will see. This threat subtends late medieval debating, from the *Querelle du Roman de la Rose* to the *Querelle de la Belle Dame sans mercy*.[5] *Effacer* (or *esfacier*: "delete, erase, expunge"), first attested in 1120, is derived from *face* (Latin: *facies*—"countenance, form, appearance, face, figure or shape"), and recorded in Tobler-Lommatzsch, Godefroy, and the *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français* (DMF).[6] The verb *effacer* and its cognate form: *desfac[i]er* ("erase completely, disfigure or deface") are often used alongside one another, extending the notion of deletion to include that of de(-)facing, or "face-off." An interesting parallel is provided by the cognates *faire* ("to make, do"), *desfaire* ("to return something to its original state, destroy") and *meffaire* ("to do wrong, dishonor"), often matched with *effacer* or *desfacer* in fifteenth-century verse as we will see in quotations from the oeuvre of Machaut and Chartier.

With this frequent semantic association, I identify a parallel in fifteenth-century debate poetry between un-facing and un-making: creating the threat of a literal erasure in text and *matière* (both in the sense of "content" and "materiality"). This is not as much a reversal with the possibility of two coexisting but contrary opinions, but the threat of complete eradication stemming from the refusal to countenance a counter argument or judgment: what Aristotle would term "contradiction" rather than "contrariety." According to the Aristotelian square of oppositions, contrariety holds two opposite objects in coexistence, whereas in contradiction the two opposing objects cancel one another out.[7] The underlying tension between opposing views or judgments is thus laid bare. The defaced miniatures found in manuscripts of Machaut and Chartier's work—whether the damage was intentional or accidental[8]—reveal a radical (but ultimately impossible) desire to deface and to eliminate or overwrite the contrary (Machaut's *contraire*).[9] Before turning to examine these images, I want to explore the parallel textual instances of un-facing or un-making in Machaut and Chartier.

Textual Erasure

Machaut's use of *effacer* is liberal in his mirrored *jugement* poems, as might be anticipated. Toward the final denouement of the *Navarre*, Avis

(Discretion), as we have already mentioned, delivers his advice to the king of Navarre, in anticipation of Navarre's forthcoming judgment:

> Je vous avis que bien **facies**
> Et que le contraire **effacies**.
> S'il vient par devant vostre face,
> Afin que point ne se parface. (*Navarre* 3432–36)[10]

> (I advise you to do what is good / And undo what is wrong. / And so it is your task, / In order that nothing may lack perfection.)

Here while Barbara K. Altmann and R. Barton Palmer's translation of "le contraire effacies" ("undo what is wrong") points us to the judge's imperative to deliver a verdict that will undo or erase a previous wrong—that will undo anything that is *contraire* to the *bien* of the previous line—the use of the substantive *contraire* alerts us to the possibility of coexisting opposite options, of contrary arguments and judgments that are held in suspension instead of canceling one another out, rendering our debates inconclusive.[11] In this quotation, Machaut uses *effacies* and *facies* as quasi-opposites ("do" and "undo," in spite of their etymological divergence, from *effacer* and *faire* respectively): suggesting a literal un-making or un-writing of what has been made/written by this "facteur de vers." In this case the *contraire* to which the judge must be alert is the finding of the *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne* (pre–1342) in favor of the knight over the lady complainant.

Lady Bonneurté (Happiness) outlines this previous verdict in her accusatory speech to the homodiegetic narrator-protagonist Guillaume, and again echoes the *effacies/facies[z]* dyad:[12]

> Et comment l'osastes vous dire,
> Ne dedens vos livres escrire?
> Il est voirs qu'einsi l'avez **fait**,
> Dont vous avez griefment **meffait**.
> Si vous lo que vous tant **faciez**
> Que ce jugement **effacies**,
> Et que briefment le rapellez. (*Navarre* 1027–33)

> (And how did you dare say this / or write it down in your book? / It's true that you have done so, / And thus you have grievously

erred. / Therefore I advise you to do what you can / To void this judgment / And overturn it at once.)

In the previous *jugement* poem, *Le Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne*, the *effacies/facies* pairing is again employed, here during the speech of the knight at the point at which he reveals his love to a lady who will later prove unfaithful. In this quotation, "love" is substituted for "le contraire": the threat is the erasure of love through the possible ill-judged actions, words, or thoughts of the knight (659):

Si pri a Dieu que jamez ne **face**
Chose envers vous qui nostre amour **efface,**
Et que vo voeil /Puisse acomplir, ainsi com je le voeil
Faire: humblement, sans hautece n'orgueil. (*Behaingne* 650–54)

(So I pray God I may never wrong you / In anything that might sully our love, / And also that I might fulfil / Your will as much as I intend, / Humbly, not haughtily, not proudly.)

The same knight later declares that anyone who openly slanders his lady love for her infidelity is prey to a destructive vice that can never be eradicated:

Car de meffait
C'est un vice si vilain et si lait,
Car qui le fait, ja de pooir qu'il ait,
N'iert de tous poins **effacié** ne **deffait**. (*Behaingne* 1156–59)

(Now deception / Is a vice so base and ugly / That the person who indulges in it, however powerful, / Will never be completely rid of it or reformed.)

We find the notion of un-making and erasure connected specifically to the defacing or disfiguring of the lover and his lady in Machaut's lays and *Voir Dit*. I will discuss the use of these cognates in the *Voir Dit* in relation to the damaged miniatures in MS A (BnF, fr. 1584) in the following section. Here I want to briefly touch on their appearance in the lays, specifically in lay 6/5 (Par trois raisons). Benjamin Albritton has identified lay 6/5 together with lay 7/6 (Amour doucement), as participating in Machaut's love debate production, alongside the two *jugement* poems and the

Lay de Plour. Lay 6/5 in particular assimilates certain aspects of the *jugement* genre, though presents only one side of the debate through the male protagonist's defence.[13]

> Las! si ne say que je **face**;
> Car sa bele **face**
> Tout mon bien **efface**,
> Quant envers moy seul est fiere,
> Et Dangiers qui me manace
> Vuet que sa manace
> De fait me **deface**
> Cuer, corps, pouoir et maniere. (Par trois raisons, *Lay 6/5*, st. 6)[14]

> (Alas! I don't know what to do / Because her lovely face / Erases all my happiness, / When she is cruel to me, / And Danger who threatens me / Wishes these threats to deface me completely: / Heart, body, power and nature.) (My translation.)

This lay effects a complete visual and auditory assimilation of making and figuring through the use of "face" to indicate both human face and human action (the feminine substantive "face," and the first person singular subjunctive of the verb *faire*). The poet's *annominatio* extends over the stanza, moving us from figuring to disfiguring, from making to un-making or erasing.

In the debate poetry and prose of Alain Chartier, too, attempts to delay, contradict, or eradicate judgments and contrary opinions are legion (Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue*).[15] While they occur throughout his production, I want to focus particularly on some examples from what came to be known as the *Querelle de la Belle Dame sans mercy* on account of the prevalence of the legal language of slander, judgment, and trial. Chartier's love debate, *La Belle Dame sans mercy* (1424; hereafter *Belle Dame*), leaves the reader with a choice to make for her/himself: whether to condemn or to excuse the "heartless" Belle Dame for her rejection of the Amant (Lover) who pursues her relentlessly throughout. Amant persists forlornly in spite of the Belle Dame's steely determination never to yield to his courtship. A narrator, concealed behind a trellis, listens and records the ill-fated courtship.

The sequels and imitations that followed over more than half a century

exploit this lack of closure (Armstrong, "Deferred Verdict"; Cayley, "Drawing Conclusions"), taking up the Belle Dame's case and trying her in a series of courts of law, formalizing the garden settings of Machaut's poetic trial sequences.[16] During this literary quarrel, both Chartier and his character, Belle Dame, are respectively put on trial. In what I have termed the "first cycle" of sequels, it is Chartier himself, and not his character, who is accused of slander against women and put on trial. In the second cycle, the focus shifts to the Belle Dame's guilt or otherwise (Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue* 136–62). Chartier's *L'Excusacion aux dames* (1425; see Hult's edition in Hult and McRae 91–113), is a dream-vision debate, in which Amours (the God of Love) appears to accuse the narrator figure (the textual Chartier) of defaming women through his infamous *Belle Dame*.

Chartier's *Excusacion* is a response to the charges (however serious)[17] that were leveled against him for his authorship of *Belle Dame* in two letters from men and ladies of the court respectively: the *Coppie de la requeste faicte et baillee aux dames contre Maistre Alain*, and the *Coppie des lettres envoyees par les dames a Maistre Alain* (see Hult's editions in Hult and McRae 85–89). The letters are found most frequently copied directly after *Belle Dame* in most of the forty manuscripts of the sequels and imitations of Chartier's original poem (Hult and McRae; McRae, *Quarrel of the Belle Dame*). After threatening to excommunicate Chartier like a heretic, and burn his book unless he recants (*Excusacion* 6), Amours warns him that he would erase all honor and goodness, were he to strip women of their pliability toward men:

> Tu veulx mon poair abolir
> Et que honneur et bonté **s'esface**,
> Quant tu quiers des dames tollir
> Pitié, mercy, doulceur et grace.
> Cuydes tu donques que Dieu **face**
> Entre les hommes sur la terre
> Si beau corps et si doulce **face**
> Pour leur porter rigour et guerre? (*Excusacion* 49–56)

> (Do you wish to eradicate my power / and make honor and goodness disappear / by trying to take from ladies / pity, compassion, sweetness, and good will? / Do you really believe that God created

> / creatures of such a beautiful body and sweet face / for men on this earth, / in order to bring them harshness and even war?) (*Excusacion* by McRae in *Alain Chartier*.)

After protesting his deep respect for women, the narrator later excuses himself for the content of *Belle Dame*, asserting that he meant nothing by it, that it is nothing but a "chetif livre [. . .] / Dont je ne suis que l'escripvain" ("this miserable book / of which I am only the scribe"; 215–16). It is striking that the way Amours and the narrator refer to *Belle Dame* here and how it is referred to by the author/s of the letters is in terms of its materiality—as an entity that can be physically removed or destroyed. This materiality can be observed in the narrator-poet's attempt to save his book from being erased from the annals of literature above; in Amours's threat to burn it; or in the entreaties of the *serviteurs* ("those in the service of their ladies"), in the *Requeste baillee aux dames*, to tear up and destroy copies of *Belle Dame* that might come into their hands:

> Ains le faictes rompre et casser
> A chascun qui le trouvera
> Et du livre de **s'esfasser**. (*Requeste baillee aux dames* 121–23)[18]

> (Rather tear and rip it up / wherever a copy is found / and erase* the book completely.)

A final riposte was received in this sequence: a *Responce des dames*, penned by an anonymous group of ladies to "Allain, feu nostre ami" ("Alain, once our friend"). There are four manuscript witnesses to this short poem that again refers to the materiality of Chartier's "original," and therefore to the possibility of its destruction (see Hult's edition in Hult and McRae 491–99). For Chartier, then, this goes beyond the notion of issuing a simple apology or a counter argument, but amounts to a literal deletion or suppression of his text: the ultimate challenge to Chartier's authorial status. Seemingly, the *Excusacion* has not gone down as well for Chartier, as the *Navarre* did for Machaut, enabling him to continue writing in the form of the *Lay de Plour*.[19] In the *Responce*, the ladies compare Chartier to a duplicitous scorpion:

> Tu oingz, tu poins, tu flattes, tu offens,
> Tu honnoures, tu fais bien, tu le casses,

> Tu t'acuses et puis tu t'en deffens,
> Tu dis le bien, tu l'escrips, tu l'**effaces**. (*Response* 4.25–28)
>
> (You are unctuous, you attack, you flatter, you offend, / You honor, you do good, you destroy it all, / You blame yourself and then defend yourself, / You speak well, you write it, then you erase it.) (My translation.)

Nothing that he can write further can help to excuse his *meffait* ("misdeed"; 84), or help him to evade the *jugement* (83) that will come upon him for his slander of women through *Belle Dame*. The only way that Chartier may recover from this, say the ladies, and avoid dying a heretic (96) is to correct his *faulx livre* ("false book"; 93). Therefore, unlike Machaut, writing a poem with an alternative conclusion (or simply an actual conclusion) and any additional poetic penance of the ladies' choosing, will not restore Chartier's reputation. As far as these women are concerned, he must literally rub out his work and start again.

As ludic as these literary combats doubtless are,[20] there is a serious ethical and political question to be addressed here about the moral authority of the writer and the public impact of her/his texts, one which Christine de Pizan addresses twenty years before the *Querelle de la Belle Dame sans mercy* as part of the series of epistolary and literary responses to the *Roman de la Rose*.[21] Christine, too, urges the burning or deletion of the *Roman de la Rose*, backed by Jean Gerson, in her desire to suppress its authority.[22] Paradoxically, these calls for reparation in the form of removing or deleting material books and letters (forms of *libricide* or *biblioclasm*) end up furthering the reputations of their authors, initiating public conversation about their texts, and reinforcing their literary and political authority. They are also suggestive of what Stephen Jaeger describes as a "powerful identification" with the texts (8). Jaeger evokes the phenomenon of "charismatic fiction" and the magnetic, even hypnotic, effect that medieval literature could exert on a reader (21–24). Though his comments relate to romance, the identification he describes can also be observed in the readers and participants of late medieval debate and through their extreme responses to texts such as the *Rose* or *Belle Dame*.

Since versions of Guillaume de Lorris's and Jean de Meun's *Rose*, Chartier's *Belle Dame sans mercy* and Machaut's *Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne* have come down to us, we can safely assume that all threats were

rhetorical.[23] However, not all manuscripts circulating the work of these poets have escaped some damage, whether willful censoring or accidental, as we shall see shortly.

Elsewhere I and others have outlined the reasons why Chartier's political and poetical works should not be separated into neat categories, or be discussed as independent of one another, in spite of supposed authorial "regrets" expressed in the prologue to Chartier's unfinished *prosimetrum* work, the *Livre de l'Esperance*.[24] Chartier's French prose work, *Le Quadrilogue invectif* (1422) in particular demonstrates the permeability of Chartier's prose and verse works. The *Quadrilogue* presents a dream-vision debate between Lady France and representatives of the three estates: Le Peuple ("People"), Le Clergé ("Clergy"), Le Chevalier ("Knight") over the plight of war-torn France, witnessed through the person of the narrator figure Chartier. Through the notions of franchise and female authority, Chartier's *Belle Dame* can be linked with the *Quadrilogue*, establishing the Belle Dame as the figure of Lady France, assailed by her enemies.[25] In this allegorical reading of *Belle Dame*, Amant would represent the cowardice and self-serving discourse of the people of France, who Chartier asserts are selfishly pursuing their individual careers and interests rather than the *bien publique* ("common good").[26] It is interesting to note in the opening to the *Quadrilogue invectif* that the house of France "entre destruction et resource chancelle" ("hanging in the balance between destruction and rescue"),[27] since this set of binary oppositions also governs the protagonists of many late medieval debates. Achille Caulier's *Cruelle Femme en Amours* opens, for example, with a narrator hovering "entre leesce et desconfort" ("between happiness and despair" [my translation]; 4).[28] This furthers our sense of the connectedness of Chartier's prose and verse debates.

In the prologue to the *Quadrilogue*, Alain Chartier speaks in his own name, urging his readers to consider the four parties' arguments together: "Si ne vueille aucun lire l'une partie sans l'autre, afin que l'en ne cuide que tout le blasme soit mis sur ung estat" ("Indeed no one should read one part and leave out the others, otherwise one might conclude that all the blame lay with one of the estates"; 8.10–12). He is conscious of the distortion that can result from a partial reading of his texts, or a suppression of one or more sides of an argument. In many ways, this can be considered a

precursor to the *Excusacion aux dames* in which the narrator-poet Chartier urges Amours to read "tout le livret" ("the whole book"; 124) in order to appreciate Chartier's respect and honor of women. He fears that a partial appreciation or reading may lead to an imperfect judgment of his text. This fear turns out to have been grounded, since the sequels of *Belle Dame* tend to take a narrowly focused view of Chartier's original debate centered around first Chartier's and then the Belle Dame's guilt or innocence. In Chartier's comments here, too, we see he appreciates the impossibility of erasing the opposite. This is the nature and the ethos of the "ideal" debate, therefore: one in which all voices are heard, and no opinions are suppressed or erased. Indeed, this is the very nature of human communication, as Mikhail Bakhtin observes. Every utterance supposes a dialogic situation and interaction between interlocutors. The suppression of one party would make this a missed or a noncommunication (Bakhtin).

There are few instances of the verb *effacer* in the *Quadrilogue*, though the implicit threat of erasure from memory resonates throughout Chartier's text and is very much embodied in the urgency of engagement in debate about France's sociopolitical situation. One appearance in the *Quadrilogue* occurs in relation to the actions of Manlius Torquatus, the Roman hero and consul, and is one of the many classical exempla adduced by Chartier.[29] Here Clergé relates how Torquatus beheads his son because he fought the enemy without his father's explicit command, in spite of the fact that he subsequently wins the battle: "en ce cas la victoire que fist le vaillant jouvencel comme vainqueur ne peut **effacier** la desobeissance qu'il fist comme transgresseur" ("in this case the battle that the young man won as victor could not erase the disobedience he showed as a sinner"; 70.2–4). I would draw a parallel here with Chartier's *Responce des dames*, discussed above. Torquatus's son cannot make good his sin even through victory, in the same way that, Amours suggests, Chartier cannot erase his slander against women through further writing.

This leads to an unpalatable conclusion, and one evocative of an Orwellian memory-hole:[30] the only true correction of wrongdoing and ill-speaking is through the erasure of what has been done or written—a rewriting of history. Yet God is merciful, suggests Chartier through his alter-ego Clergé (the voice of biblical authority), and sees all sides of the debate. He understands that deeds once done are enshrined in history;

that words once spoken or written cannot be erased.[31] He teaches us the concept of repentance. In God alone lies the final judgment: human judgments are insufficient and ultimately futile. This is doubtless one of the underlying reasons behind the "aesthetic of irresolution" of debate poetry in the Middle Ages (Reed), and the deferral of judgments. While judges are often sought, and indeed appointed, God is understood as the ultimate judge, and reserves the right to overthrow human sentences. "In Deum reffero sentenciam" ("To God I leave the outcome/judgment"), the Sodalis (Companion) concludes in Chartier's *Dialogus familiaris* (Bourgain-Hemeryck 245–325, my translation).

The four-way debate proves inconclusive. Lady France cuts off the reasoning of the three estates in exasperation and then turns to the narrator-poet Chartier to record the debate for posterity:

> J'ay assez ouy de voz tençons, pour ce vueil que atant vous en souffrez ou surseez. Toutesvoies, afin que en vain n'ait esté gastee vostre saison, je ordonne voz raisons estre escriptes a ce que chascun y congnoisce sa faulte par autrui et que ceulx qui les liront **effacent l'erreur** de leurs cuers [. . .] **escry ces parolles afin qu'elles demeurent a memoire et a fruit**. (Lady France, *Quadrilogue* 7–12, p. 83; 20)
>
> (I have heard enough of your opinions, and I hope that you will suffer or even die for them. However, so that your time has not been entirely wasted, I order your arguments to be copied down so that everyone may understand his/her error through another's, and that those who read it will erase wrongdoing from their hearts [. . .] [To the narrator] "Write down these words so that they remain and bloom in memory.")

In contrast with earlier readerly calls for the deletion of opposing arguments, here there is a realization that, echoing Chartier's opening plea for consideration of the whole debate, *le contraire* must be preserved, not erased. Through contemplation of all opposing arguments, the reader of the *Quadrilogue* is trusted to steer their own moral compass, and to act accordingly.

Visual Erasure

Now I turn to a series of intriguing examples of damage to miniatures in manuscripts collecting Machaut and Chartier's works respectively and, additionally, evidence of damage from *Roman de la Rose* manuscripts (Figures 2.1–2.8).[32] I want to interpret these miniatures as visual instances of erasure or defacing, made by hand, by accident, or simply by time. Where these damaged images were deliberate, as in the case of many of the Chartier images, and in some cases the Machaut and *Roman de la Rose* images as well, this explicit censorship represents a direct challenge to the literary and political authority of the author on the part of the reader. Where they are accidental (and we may never be able to pronounce definitively on this question), at the very least this represents a challenge in the sense of an attack on the textual/visual memory and reception of the author, and therefore implicitly on his/her authority. The author's writings, like his/her physical body, are subject to the vagaries of time, editors, and textual disintegration, as François Villon famously explores in his mock will, the *Testament*.[33]

Chartier's *Quadrilogue invectif* provides us with a starting point to connect textual and visual erasure in the person of Lady France and her shabby tripartite *mantel* ("cloak"). The three parts which have been sewn together refer us to the three estates engaged in debate:

> De si precieux et riche ouvraige estoit basty cellui mantel et de si longue main avoit on mis paine a y ouvrer et faire l'assemblee des parties dont il estoit composé que dessoubz le ciel ne fut veu le pareil [. . .] cellui mantel, assemblé par la souveraine industrie des predecesseurs, estoit desja par violentes mains froissez et derompuz, et aucunes pieces violentement arrachees, si que la partie de dessus se monstroit obscurcie et pou de fleurs de liz y apparissoient qui ne feussent debrisees ou salies. (*Quadrilogue* 13–17, p. 11; 21–25, p. 11)

> (This cloak showed evidence of such precious and rich work and had been worked on painstakingly for such a long time to put all the sections together that its equal had never been seen on earth[. . . .]

> this same cloak, put together by the supreme effort of our ancestors, had already been crumpled and ripped by violent hands, and parts had been violently torn away, so that the top part was obscured and there were few fleurs de lis there that were not tattered or dirty.)

The disfiguring of Lady France's cloak here is an allegory of the disfiguring and undermining of France itself: no one is free from the stain of blame. It is impossible to see the robe clearly, since it is *obscurcie*; the *fleurs de liz* representing France's nobility are stained and tattered, and the cloak itself has been damaged and torn. Lady France's political integrity is compromised by the actions of her people who destroy her from within.

In her seminal study of memory in medieval culture, Mary Carruthers evokes Richard de Fournival's explanation of the medieval trope of the two gates or portals through which human memory can be accessed (sight and hearing) via two roads, *painture* and *parole* ("image" and "text") (Carruthers, *Book of Memory* 223–24). *Painture*, as Carruthers indicates, encompasses not only images within the manuscript but also mental images conjured up through hearing *parole* spoken out loud.[34] It is also the physical appearance of the text, including all paratextual elements such as layout and punctuation. Both Machaut and Chartier were concerned to project a certain image of themselves through their texts and, further, the reception of these texts in their manuscript context reinforces that authority.

While there are no recorded autograph copies of Chartier's work, no presentation copies identified, or evidence that, like Christine de Pizan, he engineered the layout of his works in manuscript copies,[35] it is clear that the positioning of Chartier's works within the manuscript tradition reinforces the reader's sense of his authority. The manuscript tradition of Chartier's Latin works tends to collect him with earlier medieval and Classical authorities; whereas that of his vernacular works, and in particular the French verse, collects him with the poetry of contemporaries and younger poets (Cayley in Cayley and Kinch, *Chartier in Europe* 75–89; Bourgain-Hemeryck 156–61). In the former tradition, Chartier is seen to be authorized by recognized and established *auctores*; in the latter he authorizes his poetic successors.

Machaut's authorial control over the reception of his works will anticipate that of Christine de Pizan in the following century. Fournival's

painture and *parole* dyad seems particularly appropriate in this case, given that Machaut's manuscripts show evidence of an overall organizational scheme, carried out across text, miniature, and paratextual elements such as rubrics. So we observe Machaut opening the portal to commit his oeuvre to perpetual *memoria* via both material routes. Before Machaut's *Prologue* in Paris, BnF, fr. 1584 (MS A), we find the rubric: "vesci l'ordenance que Guillaume de Machaut wet qu'il ait en son livre" ("here is the order that Guillaume de Machaut wants in his book"). Other rubrics confirm our sense of the interdependence of texts within the manuscript collection.[36] In three of the seven manuscripts where the two *jugement* poems are copied together, including MS A, the scribe has added the rubric: "Le Jugement dou Roy de Navarre contre le roy de Behaigne" ("The Judgment of the King of Navarre against that of the King of Bohemia"), to introduce the second of Machaut's *jugements*, directly juxtaposing the two in material space in spite of the gap in the dates of their composition.

Given the high degree of planning evident in MS A, then, it seems even more striking that we should find examples of what may be deliberate damage to at least one, if not two miniatures in the *Voir Dit* section of the manuscript.[37] The two images I identify are painted in MS A on fol. 285^{v}, and fol. 293^{r} (Figures 2.1 and 2.2) and illustrate key narrative moments in the *Voir Dit* (all references to Paul Imbs's and Jacqueline Cerquiglini's edition).

Figure 2.1 depicts the giant Polyphemus attacking a ship with a crook. This miniature introduces a classical exemplum adduced during the speech of Guillaume's secretary. The secretary attempts to dissuade Guillaume from journeying to visit Toute Belle, having received her final letter. His increasingly desperate exempla include Picus, king of Laurentium, whom Circe transforms into a woodpecker; and this one, which outlines the tragic killing of Galatea's beloved, Acis, through Polyphemus's unnatural love for Galatea:

Se vous estiés or sur la roche
Du jaiant qui les nez arroche
Des grans pierres et des grans cros!
Tant est fors, orguilleus et gros
Que les nés perist et affonde
Dedens la haute mer parfonde. (*Voir Dit* 6741–47)

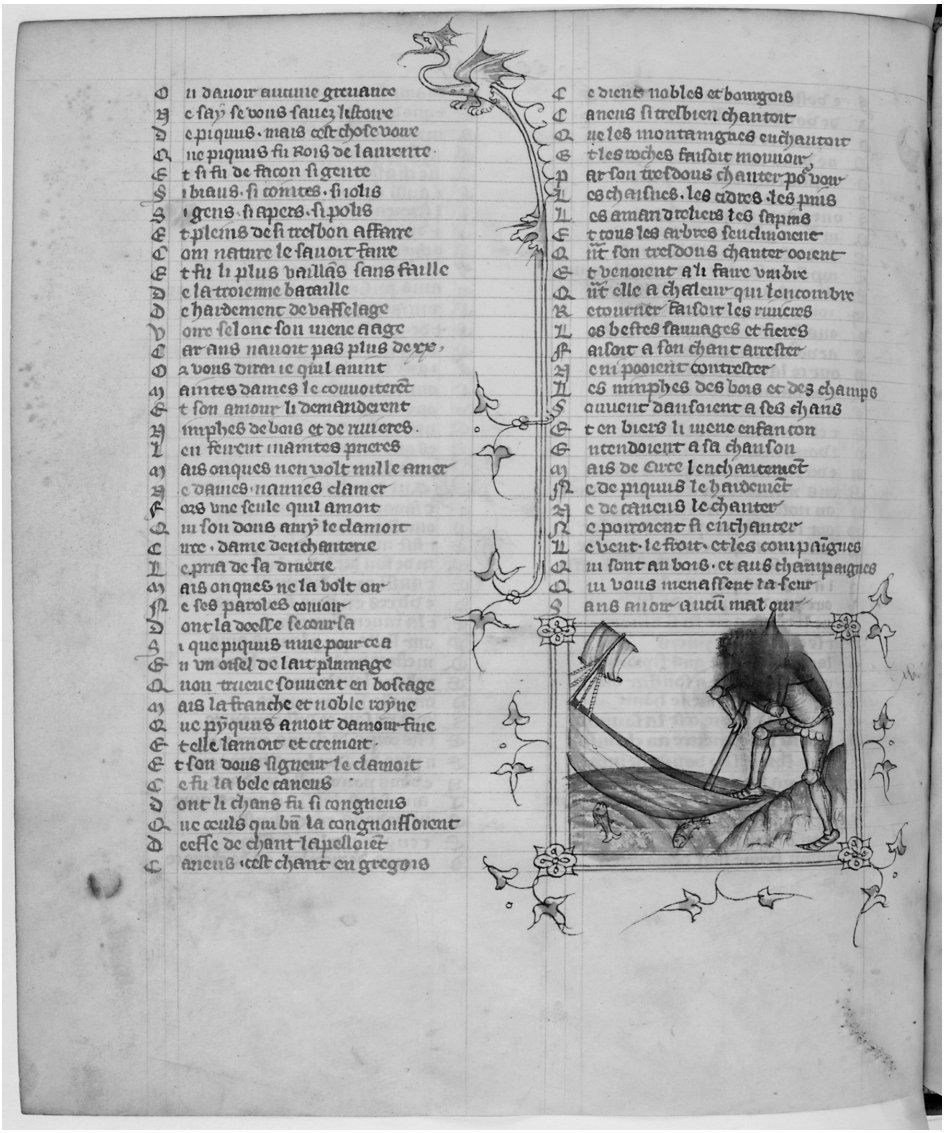

Figure 2.1. *Le Voir Dit*: The monster Polyphemus sinks boats. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 1584, fol. 285^{v}.

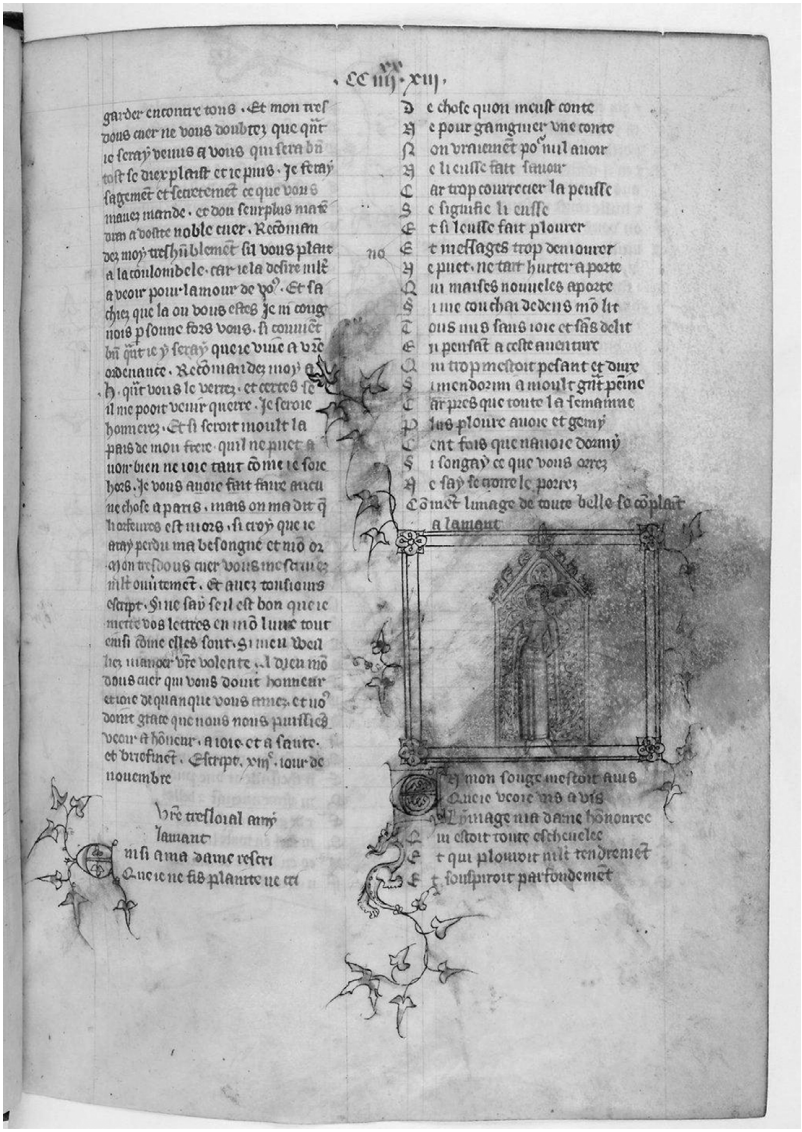

Figure 2.2. *Le Voir Dit*: The image of Toute Belle complains to the narrator-poet Guillaume. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 1584, fol. 293r.

> (Imagine you were now on the rock / Of the giant [Polyphemus] who attacks ships / With large rocks and great crooks! / He is so strong, proud and athletic / That he destroys and sinks ships / In the depths of the vast sea.)

Why the face of Polyphemus should have been deliberately wiped off and erased, leaving smudged ink and water stains in a confined part of the image is unclear. However, the damage to MS A demonstrates an attack on the integrity of the text, and presents us with a form of iconoclasm.[38] The defacing of the giant, described by Machaut in no uncertain terms as having a *bouche* ("mouth") that "ressemble une fosse / Puant com charogne de mors / Qu'il a mengié, occis et mors" ("was like a pit that stank of the rotting flesh that he had eaten, killed and devoured"; 6773–75), appears to be an attempt to conceal Polyphemus's identity, a deliberate censoring of the visualization of one of Machaut's most explicitly gory descriptions. In similar vein, the further reader-inflicted damage we will observe targets only faces, attempting to expunge identities, to censor and neutralize authorial presence and authority in the text within its material tradition of reception.

Figure 2.2, Comment l'image de Toute Belle se complaint a l'amant, depicts the image of Toute Belle appearing to chastise the poet for locking her in a *coffre* ("casket"). She appears to him in a dream-vision, disheveled and weeping:

> En mon songe m'estoit avis
> Que je veoie vis a vis
> L'iymage ma dame honouree
> Qui estoit toute eschevelee
> Et qui plouroit moult tendrement. (*Voir Dit* 7665–69)

> (In my dream it seemed to me / That I came face to face / With the portrait of my honored lady / Who was completely disheveled and was softly weeping.)

Irony lies in the fact that we have here a miniature depicting a portrait as it addresses the poet-protagonist, multiplying the levels of artifice (or mise-en-abîme) as only Machaut knows how. That these defaced miniatures should illustrate the *Voir Dit* is significant. Machaut's *Voir Dit*, like his *jugement* poems, plays with the idea of effacing text as a metaphorical

deletion of the person who has sent it: we witness the fusion of poet and book, or love-object and portrait. Throughout the text, the narrator-poet Guillaume is identified with his book, and Toute Belle with her portrait: Machaut shows us the complementarity of text and image, male and female—the binomial pairs on which the game/debate of love turns. Here, both book and portrait are defaced: the threat of erasure extends to *painture* (in its broadest sense) and *parole*.

> Si fis ce rondel en chemin
> Et li tramis en parchemin;
> Mais elle y fist tele response
> Que mon ouvrage **efface** et **ponce**. (*Voir Dit* 2785–88)

> (I composed this rondeau as I journeyed / And I took it to her copied on parchment; / But she composed such a response to it / That it was as though that she had scratched out and erased my work.)

The pairing of *effacer* and *poncer* ("to polish/pumice") here is key. The latter verb refers to a technical procedure whereby the parchment was literally rubbed clean with pumice, as with a palimpsest. The threat of textual erasure and rewriting comes full circle here, as writing is literally erased and covered by a palimpsestual text. The damage to this miniature looks less deliberate than the previous image, and indeed Domenic Leo's opinion is that it is highly unlikely to be deliberate damage, given the nature of MS A.[39] While this may not be deliberate, the damage has occurred, it may be more or less contemporary, and my reading of this defacing is very much in the spirit of the reception of the text alongside the damaged image.

Figures 2.3–2.6 are damaged miniatures found in manuscripts containing the French verse and prose works of Alain Chartier. These were first identified by Camille Serchuk who kindly agreed to my use of them here.[40] According to Serchuk, these attacks on Chartier manuscripts were not faith-based or politically motivated; rather they constitute a series of non-coordinated "acts of vandalism" that she links to the *Querelle de la Belle Dame sans mercy* and the emotional response the Belle Dame, and by association Chartier, provoked in readers. She dismisses political hostility via *damnatio memoriae* ("the damnation of memory") as a context for considering the damage. The ancient Egyptian and Roman practice of

Above: Figure 2.3. *Le Quadrilogue invectif*: Clergé addresses Lady France. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, 78C7, fol. 16r.

Left: Figure 2.4. *Le Livre de l'Esperance*: Chartier in his study. Berlin, Kupferstich-kabinett, 78C7, fol. 24r.

Figure 2.5. *La Belle Dame sans mercy*: The Belle Dame and her suitor play chess. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 71 E 49, fol. 9r.

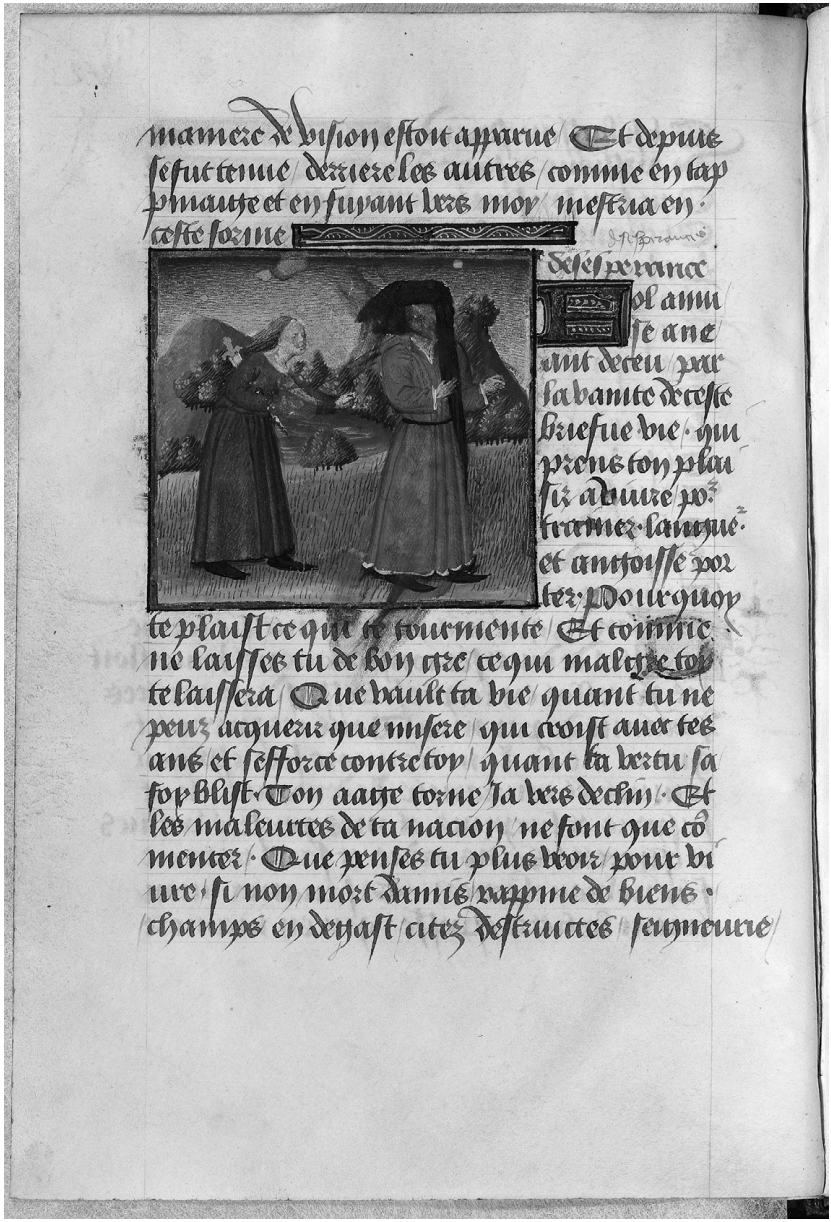

Figure 2.6. *Le Livre de l'Esperance*: Desesperance harangues the narrator-poet. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 2265, fol. 12^{v}.

damnatio memoriae was the literal effacing and editing out of a historical figure or group through the destruction of paintings, sculptures, writings, records, epitaphs. As Sarah Bond affirms, it was "a punishment worse than execution: the fate of being forgotten."[41]

Against Serchuk, I would argue that *damnatio memoriae* with its context of political hostility does in fact provide a helpful framework in which to consider the damaged Chartier miniatures. It was often used, and is still used today, as Bond makes clear, in instances where a political leader seeks to efface the memory of a previous regime, or that of opposing political actors. We can clearly read echoes of Jaeger's "powerful identification" here in the deliberate disfiguring of the images portraying both Chartier in his text, and Chartier's protagonists. This is a destructive violence, as Serchuk notes,that sits at odds with the ludic nature of Chartier's debates.

However, as we have seen above, the threat of erasure of opposing arguments (*le contraire*) is implicit, and often becomes explicit, both textually and visually in late medieval debates, especially those of Guillaume de Machaut and Alain Chartier. The damage in the Chartier manuscripts (and here I concentrate on just some of the defaced images identified by Serchuk),[42] is most probably deliberate, and Serchuk hypothesizes that it was achieved with the corner of a damp cloth or rag swiped across the image. The damage we see here is largely caused by water (like the Machaut miniatures), rather than from any kind of sharp instrument scratching the surface of the miniature (such as is more likely in figures 2.7 and 2.8).

Kathryn Rudy discusses forms of wear in manuscripts in her work, elucidating the devotional practice of rubbing and kissing particular religious images or words during rituals ("Kissing Images" 4).[43] It is worth noting that ours is in addition rather inhabitual damage, and not likely to result from regular wear and tear, or indeed enthusiastic readerly rubbing and kissing—Rudy's "iconophilia" ("Kissing Images" 21).[44] Unlike the damaged miniatures in MS A, here, damage is more widespread, and importantly, readers have targeted not only Chartier's protagonists but also, and predominantly, his own image as it appears in miniatures accompanying his texts (figures 2.4 and 2.6 present Chartier as the narrator-poet within his text: the *Livre de l'Esperance*). Figures 2.3 and 2.5 present a defaced Clergé from the *Quadrilogue*, and a defaced *Belle Dame* from Chartier's *Belle Dame*. While I noted the damage to the face of the Belle Dame in

my 2006 monograph, I did not speculate as to whether or not it may have been deliberate (Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue* 166).

Serchuk's argument here is convincing, and, indeed, evidence of water damage on the page shows how a cloth might have moved from the Belle Dame's face to the writing beneath, which is partially smudged. In the light of my discussion above of the political substrate of Chartier's French verse and its intertextual links with the prose, it is perhaps not surprising that readers should have chosen to expunge her face, alongside that of her creator, and of the protagonists of Chartier's prose works. These are clear indications of a sentiment akin to what Rudy terms "iconophobia" (after Patrick Collinson),[45] though her terminology refers largely to the devotional context ("Kissing Images" 21).

Figures 2.7 and 2.8 are taken from two manuscripts of the *Roman de la Rose*. Olivia Robinson has observed that in these and a series of other manuscripts from the tradition, the face of Le Jaloux appears to have been deliberately scratched or wiped out.[46] This appears to be a more straightforward case of the censuring of an abusive husband (along the lines of Polyphemus in MS A), and while it is unlikely that this was a coordinated attack, given the range of manuscripts where it occurs (as with the Chartier damage above), the tendency to attack this particular scene and this particular protagonist makes for speculation on the wider material consequences of the *Querelle de la Rose*, just as Serchuk speculates about partisans in the *Querelle de la Belle Dame sans mercy* causing that damage to Chartier's memory.

Figures 2.3, 2.5, and 2.6 are key to my arguments here. In each of these miniatures, we observe a debating pair; a man and a woman: Lady France and Clergé (3); the Belle Dame and her suitor (5); Desesperance and Chartier, the narrator-poet (6). While the damaged miniatures that depict a single figure or protagonist are fascinating to consider, it is the miniatures that depict the debate in action that focus our attention on instances of erasure and un-making. Here the reader alerts us to their view of the debate through their attempt to suppress one of the two opposing voices. These instances of visual erasure can be read as a judgment call by the reader who elects themself judge of the debate for posterity, consigning one set of arguments or beliefs to the "memory hole."

Figure 2.7. *Le Roman de la Rose*: Le Jaloux beats his wife. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 12595, fol. 69v.

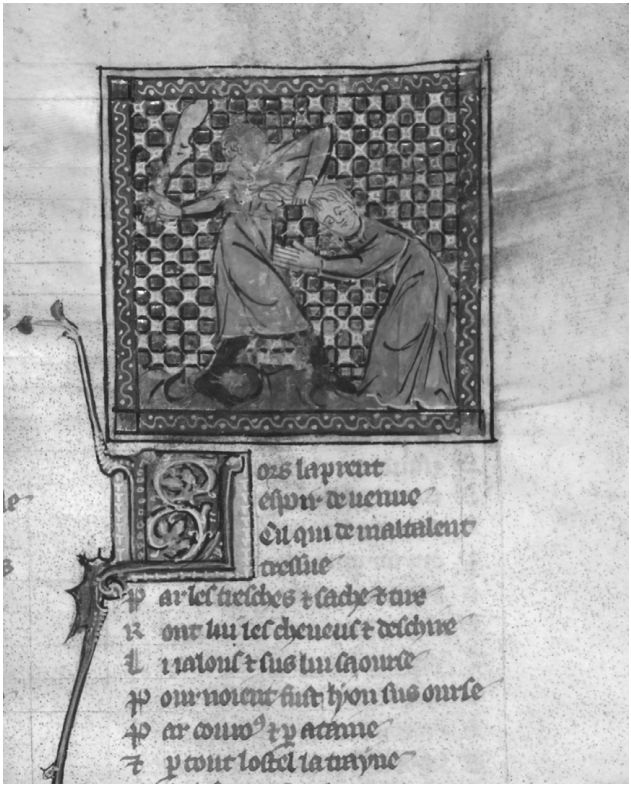

Figure 2.8. *Le Roman de la Rose*: Le Jaloux beats his wife. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 3338, fol. 64r.

Conclusion

In my concluding remarks, I want to pause briefly on the damaged image of Clergé (Figure 2.3), as the paratextual elements on this folio have a particular significance to our arguments. The miniature is painted to introduce Clergé's first speech in the *Quadrilogue,* and one line of the text that follows is highlighted in the Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett 78 C 7, fol. 24^{r} with a marginal pointing hand or manicule. This is an intriguing addition: could this be a hand drawn by the same hand that caused the damage to Clergé's face above? Whatever the case here, we have a written hand that points to "discors et debas" ("conflicts and debates") in the text and a putative hand that has defaced one of the two debating figures in the miniature above. Clergé's words here are focused on the conflictual nature of the debate in which the three estates are engaged with Lady France, and this debate reflects the internal and external divisions and conflicts through which France is being torn apart:

> Assez et plus que noz sens ne peuent redrecier ou noz paciences souffrir avons sur nous de discors et debas et sommes persecutez des divisions dedens et dehors, sans ceste nouvelle tençon esmouvoir, et si voulons ceulx ressembler qui voient le feu embrasé et esprins par leurs lieux et habitacions et sont en question pour debatre entre eulx qui le feu y a mis et a qui le devoir de l'estaindre appartient. (*Quadrilogue* 6–15, p. 56)[47]

Clergé's reference to the sterility of the debate, in which nothing is produced, and no action is taken, reminds us once again of the inherent tension of the debate genre.[48] Two or more opposing arguments must balance one another at the heart of the debate; to come to any conclusion within the textual frame of the debate negating one or more arguments may undermine the stability of the whole. The threat of erasure must remain just that—a threat; and within the textual framework of the poem, it usually does. In these visual instances of damage to the manuscripts, verbal violence and threats have spilled over into material action. A form of *damnatio memoriae* is attempted on the literary and political authority that authors such as Guillaume de Machaut and Alain Chartier enjoy. Paradoxically, these attempts merely serve to provoke debate and speculation

about these medieval *auctores*, enhancing rather than dimming their memory.

The reader, through that "powerful identification" mechanism, has picked a side and enacted her own conclusion on a debate that will not end.

Notes

1. See Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue,* for an account of the "debating climate" of late medieval France.

2. For English translations of Machaut's *jugement* poems see Altmann and Palmer 11–175. For Middle French editions see Wimsatt and Kibler, and Palmer.

3. Elsewhere I have shown how practical and political debating, and how such questions as the nature of good government, the common good, the worth of women, and the quest for peace inform Chartier's literary works. See Cayley, "'Ainchois maintien'"; Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue*.

4. My translation. Unless otherwise stated, I will be using Altmann and Palmer's translations of the *Navarre* and *Behaingne*.

5. See Hicks; Greene; McWebb; Hult; and Hult and McRae.

6. See Tobler, Lommatzsch, and Christmann. See also the entry under *effacer* in the DMF hosted by ATILF http://www.atilf.fr/dmf, accessed 20 May 2014.

7. On Aristotle's distinction see Solterer, *Master and Minerva* 103–04; and Lloyd 86–89.

8. The deliberateness, or otherwise, of the defacement of these manuscript miniatures is a matter for speculation and many will disagree on the intention that may or may not lie behind it; however, since the damage has indubitably occurred, we can interpret the images through, in spite of, or with that very damage via an appreciation of the reception of the texts in their material contexts.

9. On contradictions and contraries in medieval literature see Solterer, *Master and Minerva*; Kay; and Bolduc.

10. I have emboldened the cognates of *effacer* and *faire* in this and subsequent quotations.

11. On nonending debates in late medieval France, see Armstrong; Reed; and Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue*.

12. On the homodiegetic narrator, see Genette's *Introduction à l'architexte*, *Palimpsestes*, and *Seuils*.

13. On the lays see also Albritton's "Citation and Allusion in the Lays of Guillaume de Machaut" and "Machaut's Lais and the *Jugement* tradition"; and Maxwell.

14. See the digital edition of the lays "Je chante ung chant: An Archive of late-Medieval French Lyrics," http//www.jechante.ex.ac.uk/archive/. For previous editions see Chichmaref; and Schrade.

15. See Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue*, esp. chap. 3, for a full exploration of Chartier's debates in French and Latin.

16. For further information on Machaut's debate poetry in relation to Chartier and contemporaries, see Cayley, "Machaut and Debate Poetry."

17. These letters may be an elaborate ploy by Chartier to provoke debate around his own poem, as they are most frequently collected in single-author manuscripts and never found apart from the other *Querelle* pieces. See Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue* 2n4; and McRae, "Cyclification."

18. *S'esfasser* is corrected/glossed by Hult as *disparaître* in his edition. My translation. This is the verse redaction of the *Requeste baillee aux dames*, found in a single manuscript, Besançon, BM 554 [Qa]; the verse redaction of the *Lettre des dames* has two witnesses: Besançon 554, and the elusive Fribourg-Diesbach MS, long thought lost, but identified by McRae with Fribourg L. 1200. The prose version of both letters was copied in at least 25 MSS. See McRae *Alain Chartier* 22 and "A Community of Readers."

19. The *Lay de Plour*, part of the narrator-poet's penance for his alleged defamation of women in the *Behaingne* directly follows the Navarre in three manuscripts: Paris, BnF, fr. 1585; Paris, BnF, fr. 9221; and Paris, BnF, fr. 843, and is also collected in BnF fr. 1584; Bern, Burgerbibliothek, 218; and Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 5203. This lay "forms a continuation of, and a textual afterlife to the *Jugement* poems." See Cayley, "Machaut and Debate Poetry" 110.

20. Nor would I wish to set up an opposition between "ludic" and "serious" poetry, since in my work (Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue* and "'Ainchois maintien'"), I attempt to break down these categories in relation to Chartier's work in particular. On the topic of late medieval French poetry's capacity for the transmission of knowledge see Armstrong and Kay.

21. See Brown-Grant; Hicks; Greene; McWebb; Hult; Hult and McRae; and also Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue*, chap. 2.

22. Christine de Pizan, Epître à Jean de Montreuil, *A moult souffisant et sçavent personne*, lines 290–95; see McWebb, 131–32. See also Jean de Montreuil's reference to this in Epistola 120, *Scis me*, lines 19–21. McWebb, 206–07.

23. In the case of the *Querelle de la Rose*, one pleasing consequence for Christine de Pizan is that although the *Roman de la Rose* itself cannot be erased, the Latin letters of her fiercest opponent, and the Rose's most vociferous partisan, Jean de Montreuil, can be, or at least, can be erased from collected manuscripts of her work containing the *Querelle* letters. See Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue* 80–86.

24. See Hoffman for the customary division of Alain Chartier's works into "serious" and "joyeuses scriptures." On the political substrate of the love lyric see Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue*, chap. 3; Cayley, "'Ainchois maintien,'" esp. 85; Shapley; Sansone; Delogu; Angelo 133–57; and Altmann. For Chartier's supposed rejection of love-lyric in his later works, see Huot on Chartier's *Esperance*.

25. See Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue* 116–20; see also Solterer, "Freedoms of Fiction for Gender," on franchise.

26. See Florence Bouchet's edition of the *Quadrilogue invectif* (2011), also her translation into modern French (2002). Citations are to lines followed by page number.

27. All French quotations from the *Quadrilogue* are taken from Bouchet's 2011 edition. All English translations are my own.

28. See McRae's edition in Hult and McRae 245–325.

29. See Bouchet on biblical and other exempla in the *Quadrilogue* 2008 edition.

30. I refer to the concept of the "memory-hole" popularized by Orwell: "This process of continuous alteration was applied not only to newspapers, but to books, periodicals, pamphlets, posters, leaflets, films, sound-tracks, cartoons, photographs—to every kind of literature or documentation which might conceivably hold any political or ideological significance," 53.

31. A Horatian concept: "Semel emissum volat irrevocabile verbum" ("Once a word has been allowed to escape, it cannot be taken back"; Horace, *Epistles* lines 18, 71) http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/horace/epist1.shtml, accessed 30 May 2014. See Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue* 140.

32. I am extremely grateful to Camille Serchuk who shared her unpublished research on damaged miniatures in Chartier with me. Tamsyn Rose-Steel and Olivia Robinson first drew my attention to the damaged Machaut and *Roman de la Rose* miniatures respectively. I deeply appreciate the intellectual generosity of all three. On readerly responses (including censorship of) to the *Rose*, see Huot's seminal study.

33. See Thiry. I am thinking especially of the well-known passage of the mock last will and testament in which the poet Villon gives control over his *Testament* and "estates" to Jehan de Calaiz, a man whom, it transpires, he has never met, lines 1844–59.

34. On memory in the Middle Ages, see Carruthers, *Book of Memory* and *Craft of Thought*; and Carruthers and Ziolkowski.

35. On Christine de Pizan see Laidlaw; Ouy and Reno; and the results of the recent AHRC-funded "Making of the Queen's Manuscript" project run by J. Laidlaw at Edinburgh: http://www.pizan.lib.ed.ac.uk/, accessed 24 May 2014.

36. See Wimsatt and Kibler's discussion of these manuscripts in their edition,

11–26, as well as L. Earp's *Guide to Research*, chap. 3. The *Behaingne* is collected in nineteen manuscripts, of which eighteen versions are virtually complete; the *Navarre* is collected in seven of these (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, fr. 1584; fr. 1585; fr. 1587; fr. 9221; fr. 22545; fr. 843; and MS Ferrell, on loan at Cambridge, Corpus Christi College).

37. Domenic Leo has suggested that the *Voir Dit* was intended to be separate, though, striking a note of caution here. See Leo's dissertation. Since the *Voir Dit* is now part of MS A, it fits with the methodology I have elsewhere in this essay described of considering manuscript reception rather than authorial (or readerly) intention.

38. On iconoclasm in the context of the Reformation see Duffy. The Carolingian context is explored by Noble.

39. See Earp, "Scribal Practice" 310–14; Leo; Alexander; and Rouse and Rouse.

40. Serchuk described these damaged images in Chartier manuscripts in a 2012 talk, "Seeing Speech: The Representation of Distinctive Voices in Illuminations in the Manuscripts of the work of Alain Chartier," unpublished paper from a journée d'Etudes co-organized by Emma Cayley, Daisy Delogu, and Joan E. McRae at the University of Chicago's Paris Center, 12–13 Oct. 2012 (*Alain Chartier: Politics, Poetics and Authority at the Medieval French Court*). See also Serchuk.

41. See Bond's *New York Times* article on the phenomenon and its historical context: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/15/opinion/15bond.html?_r=0, accessed 30 May 2014.

42. See also for example, Paris, BnF, fr. 1133, fol. 4, another example from the *Livre de l'Esperance*.

43. Rudy recently presented a paper on this topic, "Targeted Wear: Why Medieval Readers Rubbed and Kissed their Manuscripts," at the Cambridge Medieval Art History seminar (29 Feb. 2016). See also Rudy's "Dirty books" and "Kissing Images."

44. Serchuk confirms that this type of damage is most unusual.

45. The term was coined by Collinson in the Stenton lectures ("From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: The Cultural Impact of the Second English Reformation," University of Reading, 1985), and explored in his study *Birthpangs of Protestant England*.

46. Robinson has pointed me in the direction of the following miniatures from the *Rose* in which Le Jaloux's face appears to have been scratched or wiped out: Paris, BnF, fr. 12595, fol. 69v; Paris, Arsenal 5209, fol. 64v; Arsenal 3338, fol. 64r; Bodleian Selden Supra 57, fol. 64r; Walters W, 143, fol. 62v; Chicago University 1380, fol. 55r. See http://romandelarose.org/ to view all these miniatures, accessed 30 May 2014.

47. "Enough and more than our senses can recover from, or our patience suffer have we heaped upon ourselves conflicts and debates, and we are persecuted by divisions within and without, before we even began this new quarrel. We seem to want to resemble those who see the fire burn and spread through their homes and dwellings, and stand around to have a debate about who started the fire and whose job it is to put it out."

48. Like the anecdote about Rome burning while the senators twiddle their thumbs, here, France is threatened with destruction while her subjects debate to no purpose or conclusion. See also the exchange between Christine de Pizan and Pierre Col on the sterility of that literary quarrel in my *Debate and Dialogue* 82–84.

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3

Courting Controversy?

Poetic Manipulations of Politics in the Mid-Fifteenth Century

HELEN SWIFT

"It may be concluded that the tenor of Machaut's own words can be taken at their face value here" (Bowers 13). Referring to Guillaume's evocation of his experience of the plague in winter 1349 at the start of the *Jugement dou roy de Navarre* (*Navarre*), Roger Bowers's injection of a note of caution ("it may be . . .") would be welcomed by medieval literary scholars, bristle as we do at any easy identification of extratextual Machaut with his textual persona and at acceptance of face-value interpretation in the complex and multivalent world of his *dits*. It may well, though, be us who need cautioning *against* our resistance to take anything as it appears on the surface, so conditioned are we by sophisticated post-*Roman de la rose* poetics in which the clothes do not make the man, suspecting False Seeming at every turn or at least creative playing off of authorial against narratorial identity.

Our resistance stems from the highly worked literariness of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century *dits* and *debats*: multilayered in their narrative schemas, coloring their personae and tale-telling with humor, and absorbing historical referentiality into an intratextual, representational, often specifically allegorical world. As Rosemary Morris remarks of Machaut's incorporation of a "named contemporary" ruler into his *jugement* poems: "the effect is not to politicize the story or make it more real, but to make the two kings less so" (550). However, whilst there is a tendency for an awareness of literary subtlety to lead us to push away from historical

contingency, political reality is ever-present in our considerations of courtly literary activity through practices of patronage, themselves so playfully, though nonetheless seriously, thematized in Machaut's *dits*, entailing an inextricability between poetry and politics (McGrady).

Subtlety, as Sylvia Huot established, is our watchword for the workings of late-medieval literature, especially the post-*Rose* intellectualization of vernacular love poetry exemplified by Machaut and Froissart ("Daisy and the Laurel" 241). "The medieval French concept of 'subtlety' [*soutil* and its congeners] encompasses artistic and intellectual ingenuity; craftiness and deception; and the delicious pains of amorous desire" ("Sentences and Subtle Fictions" 197). Its range of uses is diverse, but it includes the "full range of powers" (198) of a literary text; it is artfulness in all its forms.

A particular concentration of, and, to my mind, conscious play on this keyword, occurs in a mid-fifteenth-century debate poem couched in the defense-of-women tradition, Martin Le Franc's *Le Champion des dames* (*c.* 1442), dedicated to Philip the Good. Its 24,000 lines are divided into five books, in the course of which, debate between the profeminine eponymous Champion, Free Will, and various delegates of his arch-misogynist adversary Foulmouth serves as a frame for reflection on literary, cultural, and political history (Swift, *Gender*). When addressing how properly to set about a love relationship, Free Will treats the familiar courtly threat of *losengiers*; to illustrate his point about the perils of concealment, he enlists the well-known thirteenth-century tale *La Chastelaine de Vergi*.

In the *Chastelaine*, a knight and his lady arrange to meet covertly by using her dog to signal the all clear, a contrivance whose precarity the Champion underlines:

> Seulement par le chiennet duit,
> Le temps et l'eure congnissoit,
> Et n'avoit aultre sauf conduit
> Quant il y entroit ou yssoit. (*Champion* 11593–96)[1]

> (Only by the trained little dog did they know the moment and the hour, and [the knight] had no other safe-conduct when he went in and out.)

He extends this anecdote into a general curial caution against "False Envy" (11589):

> Ne se fye en chien affaitié
> Qui en court demourer desire.
> Ung chascun y est enhettié
> A espier, veoir et dire. (*Champion* 11601–04)

> (Whoever wants to remain at court should not place his trust in a fitted-up dog. Everyone there is encouraged to spy, witness, and speak out.)

So far, so *Policraticus* in its insistence on envy as scourge of the court (John of Salisbury 7.24),[2] but he adds a further twist, relating the perils of trying to outwit the court to the art of writing:

> Car si soubtillement escrire
> Ne porras qu'ung plus soubtil oeul
> En blanc papier ne sache lire
> Ce que tu cuides sçavoir seul. (*Champion* 11605–08)

> (For you cannot write so subtly that a more subtle eye is not able to read in a blank sheet of paper that which you think you alone know.)

Savoir is the skill behind *soubtilité*: the skill of the writer as well as that of the reader; the Champion laments as inevitable that the former's artfulness can always be outplayed by the latter. This example of subtlety is of note for how its very literariness—its metafictional intertextuality—is tied into, rather than distanced from, political concerns.

We ascribe a requirement for readerly subtlety to ourselves as critics. Our instinct being to interrogate our materials, we expect to *need* to ask questions to prompt them to tell their story. For instance, we query why Machaut decided to respond to one of his most popular works, *Le Jugement dou roy de Behaingne* (*Behaingne*), with *Navarre*, alleging deficiencies in the original.[3] It comes, then, as a shock to us when a text volunteers an answer unprompted, as occurs in Le Franc's poetic response to his *Champion*, *La Complainte du livre du Champion des dames a maistre Martin le Franc son acteur*. Staging a debate between Book and Author, it discloses the *Champion*'s unsuccessful reception at the Burgundian court and tells us precisely why it met with failure: Book identifies explicitly

"the principal cause," accusing Martin: "you were at Basel" (*Complainte* 226, 229). He blames the writer's allegiance to the Council of Basel, from which Philip had withdrawn his prelates in 1438. But does this straightforward revelation necessary satisfy the questions to which we want answers? The *Complainte* features in the second presentation copy of the *Champion* (Paris, BnF, fr. 12476 [P1]), in which the latter text is complete and unedited, with none of the passages expressing Basilien support excised: why flag up problems, therefore? Why seem to make its second attempt at court entrée more difficult than the first? Not to mention that there is no external evidence to corroborate the rejection of the first presentation copy (Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 9466 [B1]).[4] In fact, could this reported failure, as our critically suspicious mind may suggest, be a fictional ruse, itself a subtle sleight of hand in a complex negotiation of patronage relations?

This study uses Machaut's *Behaingne* and *Navarre* as a launchpad for reading the relationship of response between Le Franc's *Complainte* and *Champion*, with the aim of understanding better the stakes at play in this fifteenth-century false retraction.[5] Machaut's first debate (*Behaingne*), as to whether a lady whose lover has died or a knight whose lady has jilted him suffers the greater grief, concludes in favor of the knight. In *Navarre*, dissatisfaction is reported with this verdict as an antifeminist position, and the writer himself is put on trial, defending *Behaingne*'s arguments and outcome; however, he eventually agrees to make amends . . . by writing further poems as penance, starting with the *Lay de Plour*. As R. Barton Palmer ("Transtextuality" 301) and William Calin affirm, *Navarre* does not constitute a full reversal or proper retraction of *Behaingne*'s conclusion. Furthermore, there is no supporting evidence of actual discontent (Palmer, "Transtextuality" 294).

Palmer rightly views the status of *Navarre* not to be a sequel to *Behaingne*, as it does not continue the same level of textual reality, but a response in which "the fiction becomes the examination of the poet's performance as poet" ("Transtextuality" 300; "Metafictional Machaut" 83). He sees *Navarre* as unique in medieval literature for the complexity of its exploration of the poetics of authorship ("Metafictional Machaut" 89). I propose that the *Complainte* may provide an instructive analogue.[6] Of great interest in considering the imbrication of poetry and politics will be

the author's demonstrated awareness of his relationship both to his work and to his audience, understanding authorship as a dialogic process. Such awareness concerns his control over the poem's content, his management of intertextuality across his own oeuvre,[7] and the metafictionality of writing poetry about the writing—and, crucially, the reception—of poetry. These have long been appreciated as concerns of Machaut that influenced a range of later writers in the *dit* and *debat* tradition, such as Alain Chartier's *Excusacion*—a further false palinode—in response to his *Belle Dame sans Mercy* (1424).

The particular pertinence of the Machaldian parallel with Le Franc is three-fold:[8] first, both *Navarre* and the *Complainte* are slippery texts that defy easy summary of their argument's development: there is many a twist and turn leading, at times, to uncertainty as to what is of primary and what of secondary concern—for instance, with the effect that one may challenge whether Book's quasi-triumphal declaration of "the principal cause" actually identifies the root of the problem.[9] Second, the reader is struck by a seemingly incongruous mix of historically engaged material and courtly personification allegory, often injected with comedy, that destabilizes any secure sense of what the "true" subject matter and tone is: in *Navarre*, the much-discussed juxtaposition of the opening plague account and the debate that follows;[10] in the *Complainte*, the interweaving of ecclesiastical controversy—conciliarism and how Martin has disagreeably "spoken about holy church" (209)—with comical bickering about literary reception that appears otherwise disengaged from the content of the *Champion*.[11] Third, within the *Champion*, Le Franc engages explicitly, at some length, with Machaut's judgment poems, as his Champion takes issue with the verdict of *Behaingne*:[12]

> Je ne m'acorde au jugement
> Machaut, car la dame pouoit
> Son amy mort incessamment
> Plourer et faire le debvoit. (*Champion* 12737–40)
>
> (I don't agree with Machaut's judgment, for the lady could mourn her lover's death unceasingly, and indeed ought to.)

I suggest that *jugement / Machaut* may be deliberately ambiguous: there is no mention of either king (Behaingne or Navarre), and the passage that

follows could be seen to take issue with elements of both: the judgment poem of Machaut the poet whose court decided in favor of a knight who argued that the dead are soon forgotten so the heart can recover (*Behaingne* 1110–21, 1716–23), and the judgment promulgated by Guillaume (textual Machaut) who picks up this point in *Navarre* against Happiness (*Navarre* 1629–69). *Navarre*'s revised verdict may be seen as profeminine; the Champion's corrective is as much anti-man as it is pro-woman, situating mention of Machaut in the context of an argument that a lover must never be false, citing after it examples of those who proved unfaithfully forgetful.

Whether or not Machaut's specific practice of response to an earlier work factored into Le Franc's composition of the *Complainte*, he is clearly operating within a very similar poetics, intertextually and metatextually, around a thematic of judgment, in the spirit, to quote Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet's felicitous coinage, of a "serious game" (49).[13] He treats seriously the materials with which he plays; for example, given the overall sacramental rather than erotic tenor of love in the *Champion*, assimilating defense of the lady's rightful mourning to the virtue of intercessory prayer for the dead (12793–97).

Author-Book Relations: Intersubjectivity and Materiality

Readers of Machaut's *dits* emerge with a distinctive sense of narratorial personality, or, at least, a cluster of characteristics accreting around *je* Guillaume: clerkly, self-deluding in love, ambitious (sometimes misplaced in chivalric aspiration). . . . This is absent from the *Champion*, whose narrator is a more simple mobile eye and ear onto the debate. The protagonist is Free Will (*Franc Vouloir*), whose name has provoked speculation that he represents "le Vouloir de Le Franc" (Jung 21). However, any development of the Champion's personality pertains not to his character so much as to his oratory, through the narrator's remarks on his style of delivery: he is, because he speaks. Neither figure is endowed with emotional subjectivity in an erotic sense: the narrator, while marveling at what he sees and hears, commending the Champion, and reproving his adversaries, has no individual psychological narrative; Free Will's emotionality is manifested through spiritual devotion to the Virgin Mary, incantatory prayer to Love (understood as the Holy Spirit), and invective against his

adversaries. Whatever bisection of implied authorial identity may or may not be occurring through the narrator/Free Will in the *Champion*, there is, in the *Complainte*, a fascinating bifurcation of poetic I-hood between Book and Author, which develops the character of both somewhat intersubjectively. The two are opposed as distinct, antagonistic entities by dint of their blame-shifting debate. Book alleges flaws in content, for which Author lies responsible:

> Se bouté m'eusses en mon sain
> Maint brocard et mainte sentence
> Dont on a entendement sain,
> Gaignié j'avoye l'audience. (*Complainte* 201–04)
>
> (If you'd stuffed my belly with many a quip and many a judgment that are readily accepted, I'd have won over the audience.)

Author has, in fact, committed betrayal:

> Ne m'as tu fait lettres porter
> Comme David fist a Urye? (*Complainte* 199–200)
>
> (Didn't you make me carry letters like David did Uriah?)

Book alludes to the letter King David wrote to Joab to position Uriah the Hittite in the front of the army where fighting was fiercest, and then to withdraw from him so that he may be struck down and die (2 Sam. 11.14–15). Book tends toward hysteria in his reactions, which ties in with Author's mocking criticism of its poor presentation of the work's content—the fault lies in the delivery, not in the package:

> Tu as cuidié du premier sault
> Que l'en cryast a la trompette:
> *A l'assault, dames, a l'assaut*![14]
> Ha! mors ta langue et ta lippette. (*Complainte* 177–80)
>
> (You believed from the first sally that one should cry out with trumpet blast: *Attack, ladies, attack*! Ha! Bite your tongue and your little lip.)

Book is deemed to have been overambitious and egotistic:

> Tu as volu trop hault parler
> Et ainchoiz que tu feusses né
> Dessus tous les aultres voler. (*Complainte* 166–68)

> (You wanted to speak too boldly and soar above everyone else before you were even born.)

Pronounced division between *je* and *tu* is reinforced by the materiality of Book, emphatically a codicological object, redolent of Guillaume's concrete collection of quires in *Le Livre dou Voir Dit*:

> . . . mon dit livre la survint,
> Crepy en feulletz plus de vingt,
> De grifs et de couteaux navré,
> Et en ma presence devint
> De tous ses membres dessevré. (*Complainte* 28–32)

> (. . . my aforesaid book popped up, crumpled into more than twenty folios, slashed by claws and knives, and before my eyes it became detached from all its members.)

But it is "subject" rather than "object," given its dramatized, narrativized subjectivity and, at times, anthropomorphism.

A discourse of chivalry yields further conflict between the interlocutors, with Book, as seen above, perceiving himself to have been abandoned on, and sent ill-equipped to, the front line, while Author reproaches its cowardice:

> . . . Ha, mon filz tendre,
> Qui les horyons va craignant
> Il ne doibt la guerre entreprendre. (*Complainte* 62–64)

> (. . . Ah, my dear son, he who fears blows should not undertake the battle.)

Author's often caustic criticism is tempered by his reference to Book as "my dear son": whilst there is bickering and separation, there is also affection and filiation in this complex fictionalization of author-book relations,

complicated yet further, of course, by its presentation within a further copy of that same book's text.

Authorship is here dialogic through dialogue—not only with the court audience but also with a further agent in the transmission process, the book itself. Book relays the patron's view, whereas, in *Navarre*, Guillaume's interlocutor Happiness represents the patron, as well as assuming responsibility as Guillaume's teacher (Palmer, "Metafictional Machaut" 87–88). Book's authority is unsteady; through his exaggeration, he is a travesty of the conventional oneiric instructor. That he is not a figure for the patron facilitates this humorous presentation: a role of comic butt sometimes associated in Machaut's work with the narrator-persona himself.

Poetry and Politics: Controversy at Court?

In the midst of the *Complainte*'s diverting, intertextually and metatextually alert dialogue, we find Book's primary accusation: that it was rejected on account of its author's support of Basel, Le Franc being secretary to antipope Felix V (Amadeus VIII of Savoy) whom the Council had elected in 1439 after deciding to depose Eugenius IV; the latter convened a separate, papal council in Ferrara to which most European rulers expressed allegiance, while support for Basel amongst secular princes depleted (Tanner 23–25).

> Item, tu as esté a Basle;
> Pour tant, comme a Basilien
> Condempné à la triquebale,
> On m'a rompu bas et lyen. (*Complainte* 229–32)

> (Item, you were at Basel; and on account of this, as if punishing a Basilien by torture, they tore me to shreds.)

Book couches his accusation in characteristically though oddly sensational terms; his evocation of torture, likening his figurative dissection by the Burgundian audience to punitive treatment inflicted upon conciliarists, adds drama rather than referential value, given the absence of violence from the Council's events (Black 85). It is not clear from this passage alone that Book is implying that there is anything disagreeable

within the *Champion*'s covers, only behind them, in the authorial intention that "fathered" it.

Indeed, it is only through inference that we can determine reportedly offensive content. Book lashes out:

> Tu as parlé de sainte eglise,
> Je ne sçay en quele manière. (*Complainte* 209–10)
>
> (You have spoken about holy church in I-don't-know-what manner.)

This could be construed either to refer to the author's speeches at Basel, whose substance Book does not know because he was not there,[15] or to refer exasperatingly to Free Will's discourse in the poem, in which, especially in book 5, he affirms the Council as the holy body of the Church when defending as dogma the doctrine of Immaculate Conception, which the historical Council declared in September 1439 (see Izbicki). "Holy Church" may also denote the personification whom Le Franc makes speak in book 2 as an apparition before the debating parties (9561–10184). She enjoins a Burgundian return to Basel:

> C'est a vous princes seculiers
> Que je parle principaument
> . . . . . .
> Revenez y! Qui vous destourne?
> Mandez y vos sages prelas! (*Champion* 9873–74, 10057–58)
>
> (It's to you, secular princes, that I speak above all[. . . .] Get back there! Who's steering you away? Send your wise prelates there!)

She accuses those who have seceded of having wrongfully provoked "division" (10054), rather than attributing blame for schism to the Council itself for having elected a different pope.

To what extent should we accept this "principal cause" at face value? It makes sense and is consistent with the political reality of the moment, but our sense of coherence may be too neat a lure. It is, after all, the opinion of a fictionalized character with a tendency for melodrama whom the author-persona wishes to prove wrong; both characters are contained within a dream vision and, as we know, "dreams work on (*oeuvre*) the

mind" (*Complainte* 470).[16] The *Complainte* itself is only 472 lines long, but within its short span it proves extraordinarily slippery in nimbly tripping from one point of argument to another, in part a result of its dialogue form, but also because of a constantly shifting focus *within* Author's arguments in response to Book's accusations. I shall trace through some of this fancy footwork to determine whether we should put greater trust in the words of one party over the other, or whether, whatever the dramatic effect of their clash in generating an impression of *pro* and *contra*, there is in fact, if not synthesis of the two, then at least elements of both to be taken at face value. The broader objective remains ascertaining what Le Franc aimed to achieve by supplementing his *Champion* with an apparent advertisement of its problems.

Subtlety and Slipperiness: How (Deep) to Read?

Before considering how the *Complainte* is intended to situate the second presentation copy of the poem (P1) in relation to the first (B1), we need to note carefully exactly what is the reported judgment of B1 by the court. Book speaks extravagantly of "this extraordinary rebuff" (*Complainte* 46), whereas Author considers its alleged rejection actually to have been premature withdrawal on Book's part. Book counters Author by relaying the courtiers' advice to the duke (clearly surmised, because whispered):

> [l'en] dit a l'oreille du sire:
> *Faictes cestui bruler ou frire,*
> *Car il porte au ventre poisons,*
> *Et si le commandez rescripre*
> *A Martin pour pluseurs raisons.* (*Complainte* 139–44)
>
> ([they] whispered into the lord's ear: *Have this one burnt or fried, for it carries poison in its belly, and order it/me to be rewritten by Martin for several reasons.*)

There is no systematic setting out of these "reasons" nor, of course, is there any "rewriting" in terms of revisions to the text, only in the sense of a recopying of the work into a second manuscript. Nothing changes in the content, and Author simply directs Book to return to the fray:

Or prenons, dis je, que tu saches
Certainement que tu seras
Batu de bastons et de haches
Et de mort ne reschapperas,
Doibs tu reculer? non feras.
Mieux vaut honnestement morir,
Ce tousjours me confesseras,
Qu'en plus vivant honte merir. (*Complainte* 401–8)

(Now let's imagine, I said, that you know for sure that you'll be beaten with batons and hatchets and will not escape death: should you withdraw? No you will not. It is better to die honorably, you'll always tell me, than to merit shame by living on.)

Tapping into Book's penchant for self-dramatization, he paints the noble trajectory of a hero, whether a *chanson de geste* warrior or a hagiographical martyr. It is uncertain whether this is foreseen as Book's destiny or just speculated as a scenario, with the hypothesizing opener, "prenons . . . que tu sache," juxtaposed with the line-initial adverb of certitude. There is, therefore, no straightforward narrative to be discerned of what has happened and what is envisaged to happen next. Le Franc plays upon very Machaldian signals of indeterminate truth: emphasizing the act of reporting (as in *Behaingne*'s multiply-relayed tale of the knight's and the lady's dispute) and speculating possibilities (like the angst-ridden Guillaume of the *Voir Dit* wondering what has or has not happened in his relationship with Toute Belle).

Author suggests that Book will be better prepared, second time around, not to launch himself forth with undue gusto:

Ne sonne mot jusques a tant
Que quelque adversaire s'atourne
Et viegne a mort combatant. (*Complainte* 386–88)

(Don't say a word until an adversary turns in your direction and comes fighting to the death.)

This is in line with Author's belief that Book should have, on first presentation, proceeded with greater shrewdness:[17]

Je te cuidoye estre advisé
Pour dissimuler long et court
A l'encontre du plus rusé. (*Complainte* 113–15)

(I thought you were shrewd enough to dissemble, whether briefly or for a while, against the most cunning.)

Somewhat at odds with the *Complainte*'s spotlighting of controversy is Author's apparent expectation that Book would have practiced concealment. There are elements in the material context of P1 that could support a shift from more prominent attack to dissimulation. The art historian Pascale Charron has explored the pro-Burgundian propaganda value of the program of sixty-six illustrations incorporated into P1, where B1 featured only two. Philip the Good is cast as the Champion, for instance, by showing the character dressed in black; iconography of the Order of the Golden Fleece (coats of arms, mythological vignettes) figures prominently on the presentation and early pages of the manuscript ("Les Réceptions" 21–27). In addition, most miniatures illustrate emblematic scenes from the lives of the women picked up in the debaters' exempla (such as Portia swallowing hot coals), playing up the surface defense-of-women argument. Charron notes an interesting alteration in visual hierarchy between the presentation miniatures of B1 and P1: the former shows a conventional scene of the poet knelt before patron and courtiers;[18] the latter uses differentiation in character size and position to reorientate the dynamic and direction of communication: the duke is centralized and seated, with the poet immediately in front of him and three courtiers of diminished size relegated to the bottom left-hand corner. It is very tempting to read this change—assuming that Le Franc oversaw the production of both manuscripts—in conjunction with Book's report of the court's reaction to the work (*Complainte* 139–44, above). While one of the diminished trio in P1 makes a whispering gesture, it can only be heard by the other two and is well distanced from the duke, who, in B1, is far more susceptible to his courtiers' remarks. Indeed, the animated attitudes and hand gestures of the assembly in B1 already visualize discontent, which could be seen to be reinforced by the manuscript's other miniature showing the besieged castle of Love that opens the text (fol. 4); alongside soldiers of Foulmouth firing arrows, the artist innovates clerics throwing books. Could this packaging of the first copy with images of conflict have

been one of the referents of Author's criticism of how Book flaunted itself too conspicuously "from the first sally"?

The role of the duke is also addressed in the *Complainte*: blame for rejection is imputed uniquely to—indeed, strategically displaced to—his courtiers,[19] with an unequivocal distinction made by Book between their insidious conduct and his rectitude: "so courteous and benign is he" (*Complainte* 132), effectively offering a (wish-fulfilment?) gloss on P1's presentation miniature. Author takes the opportunity to echo this praise in response to Book's report:

> Plaisir me fais quand le duc loes,
> Lui respondis je prestement,
> . . . . . .
> Car il n'a soubs le firmament
> Plus cler ne plus noble courage,
> Sauve la paix entierement
> De chascun prince preux et sage. (*Complainte* 153–54, 157–60)

> (You please me in praising the duke, I answered immediately, . . . For there is not beneath the firmament a more distinguished or noble character—save the peace of each virtuous and wise prince.)

This laudatory portrait could be seen to offset critical remarks in the *Champion*, cited above, when "secular princes" who have abandoned Basel are targeted for reproach. However, once again there is potential light-footedness by Le Franc, as what or whom Author commends is not necessarily Philip, but a category of noble and wise princes, presumably intended as those who respond positively to the *Champion*'s persuasion to return to the Council? While there certainly seem to be grounds for concluding that deliberate revision of the poem's material presentation in P1 sought to conceal its more provocative content, the presence of the *Complainte* in that same copy flagging up that content remains problematic.

The displacement of blame onto Burgundian courtiers attributes them, by the same token, with greater subtlety of intelligence than the duke, since, whilst he was welcoming, it was they who proved more shrewd (*rusé*) in perceiving how the *Champion* may carry deeper messages "in its belly." But Author is quick to deny that there is, in fact, any poisonous heart to the work:

> Toutes fois n'as tu riens porté
> (Soyes en seur, je le te jure)
> Blechant aucune auctorité
> Ou faisant a personne injure. (*Complainte* 249–52)

> (However, you haven't carried anything [be certain of it, I promise you] wounding any authority or damaging anyone unjustly.)

Here again, though, there is dexterous handling of expression that furnishes a more subtle, itself dissimulated, meaning: Author does not state that there is nothing provocative in his work, only that there is nothing to wound any authority or damage anyone unjustly. There may well, therefore, be justified criticism or, equally, material that, far from seeking damage or injury, aims at correcting behavior and restoring (the Church's) authority and strives to work for the common good rather than targeting a particular body or individual. Concern for *la chose publique* is a commonplace in fifteenth-century polemical literature.[20] Helen Solterer has written of Christine de Pizan playing the role of "public advocate," after a Ciceronian model of oratory, as an enabling template for civic action that makes a virtue of injurious language, since the speaker who blames is identifying the forces that jeopardize the state and thereby safeguarding the body politic. Blaming is not a divisive speech act, but acts in the interests of coherence (Solterer 121). In the prologue to the *Champion*, Le Franc cites certain Classical authorities to buttress his own rhetorical project, including Cicero, but also Persius and Juvenal (Jung 20–21),[21] remarking, for instance: "I won't ever deny that I said many things through indignation, like Juvenal, satiric poet, who, writing against the vices of his time . . ." (*Champion* p. 6). It is possible, therefore, to see him casting at least some elements of the *Champion* as invective, in light of both this prefatory admission and the above-cited stanza in the *Complainte* denying injury to any individual.[22]

The most arresting invective content of the *Champion* is found in the speeches of Lady Holy Church, imprecating her false sons for betraying their true mother, and of Lady France exclaiming against those responsible for devastating France and issuing angry imperatives to repair damage inflicted during the Hundred Years War (3122–60).[23] Both personifications play on the figure of the body politic, most strikingly in Holy Church's representation of her "precious body" being pierced by the

"false tongues" of traitors (9655–56). Furthermore, in the *Complainte*, immediately preceding lines 249–52, Author lays bare to his interlocutor the object of his rhetorical art:

> Or saches, fieulx, que ma science
> N'est pour oreilles affoler:
> Je n'en eulx oncq experience;[24]
> Ains est pour langues affiler. (*Complainte* 245–48)

> (Now take heed, my son, that my skill is not in delighting ears—I've never had experience of that—but in sharpening tongues.)

So, however provocative or not the poem's content (and in whatever manner), his aim is to stimulate discussion,[25] with the sharpening of tongues evoking an aggravated response,[26] such as the raising of objections evoked by the courtiers' animated postures in B1's presentation miniature.

If the *Champion* is intended to incite debate, this suggests that it carries material of concern to a broad audience, with the poet acting in the interests of "our public good (*chose publique*)" (*Champion* 9972). The vehement denial of injurious substance made in Author's parenthetical reiterated assurance, "be certain of it, I promise you" (*Complainte* 250), whether accurate or misleadingly overdetermined, in and of itself draws attention to what is being asserted and suggests that subtle interpretation may need to be brought to bear. As Solterer pithily remarks, "fiction always carries political weight. Especially in the denial of it" (141).

Intertextual and Political Mapping: The Path of Virtue

In a further shift, Author moves into moralizing mode in the second half of the *Complainte*, allegorizing Book into a figure of Virtue. He begins with the personal encouragement that it is "in the first labors of virtue" (*Complainte* 297), before a series of three stanzas structured around sentential expressions regarding Virtue's worldly struggles, its resilience, and ultimate invincibility:

> Vertu ne puet estre sans guerre.
> . . . . . .
> Vertu ne repute deux neffles
> Se Male Bouche la combat

. . . . . .
Vertu en guerre a son esbat. (*Complainte* 301, 309–10, 313)

Tout est a vertu transitoire;
Vertu passe tout et endure
Pour acquerir honneur et gloire
Et renon lequel tousjours dure. (317–20)

(Virtue cannot exist without conflict. . . . Virtue doesn't give a fig if Foul Mouth fights her. . . . Virtue thrives in war. . . . To Virtue, everything is transient: Virtue outlives everything and endures to acquire honor, glory, and everlasting renown.)

This moralization's direct addressee is Book, its explicit function being to embolden it to return to court. There is also quite dense intertextuality directed at the implied audience, the court itself, to persuade them not only to accept but also to value more considerably the work on offer.

The *Champion*'s virtue is pitched against the curial culture of envy and trifles, its lasting merit opposed to their taste "for transient tales and events" (*Complainte* 56). The figure of Virtue proposed could be seen as specifically Christian, promising eternal reward for virtuous deeds, but is also evocative of worldly ambition. In addition, in line with other Classical resonances in the poem, it may play off the Roman sense of *virtus*,[27] whether quite generally, in terms of an ideal of courageous, manly conduct;[28] or more intricately, regarding the contribution of *virtus* to the interests of the *res publica* (thereby tying in with above discussion of concern for the *chose publique*); or even playing upon the *clerc/chevalier* dichotomy, as the poet-clerk submits the humble product of his labors to the aristocratic patron. Cicero determined that *virtus*, earned by merit not birthright, was accessible to the *novus homo* (Wood 94–95); Le Franc's Author refers to Book's first steps down the path of virtue, above, and also explains its rough treatment by the court in terms of its status as a "newcomer" (*Complainte* 256).[29]

The most intriguing intertextuality ties Virtue in with Le Franc's own oeuvre. Most straightforwardly, mention of "Foul Mouth" (*Complainte* 310) immediately conjures up the dramatic scenario of the *Champion*, casting Free Will himself as Virtue, with the "conflict" being his ultimately

victorious war of words against Foulmouth's representatives. More complex, because potentially more significant in its ramifications, is an implied interplay with Le Franc's only other known vernacular work, a *prosimetrum* debate *L'Estrif de Fortune et Vertu* (*c.* 1447–48). I have argued elsewhere for there being strong echoes of argument and expression to support this link ("Martin Le Franc"; "Competing Codes"),[30] so will focus here on its implications.

The *Estrif* was commissioned by Philip the Good and was very successfully received; over thirty manuscript copies survive (*Estrif* xvii–xxviii).[31] The subtle argument that one could see interplay with the *Complainte* to imply would be that, in the *Estrif*, Virtue's victory in debate with Fortune, arbitrated by Reason, buttresses Author's certainty in the *Complainte* that Virtue, representing the *Champion*, will triumph—will experience renown—in the end. Of particular interest here is the political context underlying the chronology of Le Franc's interactions with the Burgundian duke: the *Champion* is first offered in 1442; the *Estrif* is presented around 1447–48; the second copy of the *Champion*, including the *Complainte*, occurs in 1451. In 1447, Le Franc was chosen by Felix V as apostolic legate to the court of Burgundy. In March 1447, Nicholas V succeeded Eugenius IV and worked toward repairing the schism. Le Franc was involved in these negotiations in his capacity as papal secretary. In 1449, Amadeus VIII stood down as pope; the Council dissolved. Amadeus died on January 7, 1451 (*Estrif* xvii–xix).[32]

But what does this coterminous sequence of events mean for our reading of the *Complainte*? It gives us a likely scenario for Le Franc's composition of the *Estrif*; it does not tell us whether the reason for this commission derived entirely from his presence at the Burgundian court in 1447 or was linked to the earlier (therefore successful) presentation of the *Champion*. It tells us that the *Champion*'s alleged political hot potato of basilien sympathies had cooled by the time of P1; it does not tell us why Le Franc chose still to foreground this aspect of the work or with what attitude toward the Council P1 was presented: a sense of desperation after its disbandment? A sense of hope under the new pope? If we were to see the *Complainte* as part of an ongoing relationship rather than a re-attempt at entry, we might see Le Franc to be building on the success of the *Estrif* to establish an identity of Burgundian sympathy (hence the rash of insig-

nia at the opening of P1), rather than leaving the *Champion* open to the charge of being too pro-French (Wijsman 225n33) through its support for Basel and personification of Lady France.

Alternatively, one could construe the *Complainte*'s overall tone as more playful, its recollection of the *Estrif* a collusive nudge from poet to patron,[33] its flagging up of Basel a knowing bite that has lost its teeth and at least part of its reference to a need for time (for Virtue to flower, for Book to be patient [*Complainte* 290]) to be looking backwards to the lapse of time between B1 and P1, and thus to the change in circumstance between the two moments.[34] However, one might alternatively start from the fact that there was, even if B1 was accepted, felt to be the need for a second copy of the *Champion*: perhaps to reinforce its messages—whether specifically the rightness of the Basilien cause or a more general suing for peace in relations with France—as a serious *speculum principis*; its references to time being assurance of the future glory (for Martin? For Philip?) ensured by adopting the course of action promoted by the poem.

"It May Be": Supplement and Status

It is tempting to respond to this aporia by recourse to Cerquiglini-Toulet's formulation of the "serious game," but it is important to consider whether this would amount to a resolution of the questions raised by the *Complainte* or a retreat from them into a substitute conclusion. Returning to the parallel with *Behaingne* and *Navarre*, the status of the *Complainte* is that of supplement to the *Champion*, but it is not, like *Navarre*, a work surviving in its own right, since the *Complainte* does not feature in any of the seven later manuscripts of Le Franc's poem. Palmer notes how, both artistically and codicologically, the meaning of *Behaingne* and *Navarre* is collective: "they cannot be considered adequately in isolation" ("Transtextuality" 284).[35] Despite, as suggested above, complex intertextual relations, the same cannot be said for the *Champion* and *Complainte*. Later copies of the *Champion*, particularly those intended for a Burgundian audience,[36] maintain the connection with Philip the Good: no new dedicatory prologue is substituted, and one manuscript includes an *Epitaphe* poem in memory of the duke.[37] It does not seem, therefore, as if the *Complainte* was excluded because the *Champion*'s value as an occasional poem had expired, but it may have been that, the particular relationship between

poet and patron having ended, it had lost its pertinence. Perhaps the *Complainte* was seen as redundant, given that subsequent manuscripts, no longer able to play on the alleged rejection of the previous copy (that is, B1), already, by dint of their existence, attested to the *Champion*'s success.

Navarre concludes with an apparent admission of error and pledge of penance:

> Je, Guillaumes des sus nommez,
> Qui de Machau sui seurnommez,
> Pour miex congnoistre mon meffait,
> Ay ce livret rimé et fait. (*Navarre* 4199–202)

> (I, the Guillaume named above, who has the surname de Machaut, in order the better to understand my fault, have composed and rhymed this little book.)

However, in light of the fancy footwork discussed above in respect of the *Complainte*, one could read contrition as self-promotion: the wish "better to know" (*congnoistre*) one's fault as a desire "to make better known" (*faire congnoistre*) through further literary production. Therefore, while Machaut's *livret* (*Navarre* and the *Lay de Plour*) at least superficially transforms the argument of *Behaingne* and Le Franc's (P1) does not change the content of the *Champion*, one could posit a similar outcome for both of authorial self-assertion through fictional representation of an apparently beleaguered writerly self.[38]

The *Complainte* does not offer us a unitary, consistent narrative of the *Champion*'s first reception, nor are we able to construct a single, coherent story about the relationship it entertains between poetry and politics. This should neither disappoint nor surprise us. Assuming the artistic mettle of Le Franc is equal to his Champion's reflections on the subtlety of literary creation, we should not expect or demand his text to yield to (our) desire to digest its workings into a concise synopsis determining clearly what to take at face value and what to question. Book begs of Author a "safe conduct" (*Complainte* 393) to guarantee its passage into the Burgundian court; he is denied any additional support[39]—any equivalent of the "fitted-up dog"—as it appears that the *Complainte* itself is intended as the safeguard of the *Champion*'s success, albeit not a key to our critical unpicking of its subtlety.

Notes

1. Translations of Le Franc's works are my own.

2. For this as a standard topos in medieval narrative and didactic writing, see Scaglione 154–55, 202–03.

3. See, e.g., Palmer, "Transtextuality" 294–96.

4. The tale of rejection is usually accepted as fact: Charron, "Les Réceptions" 13.

5. One possible flaw in this comparison could be seen to be the different addressees of the two *jugements*, whereas Le Franc's two poems target the same patron; however, as the patron of *Navarre* may have been changed to the king of Navarre only late in its composition, the impact of its dedicatee on the content of the poem is uncertain: see Earp 209–10.

6. Palmer considers an analogy with the continuation of *Le Roman de la rose*: "Transtextuality" 300.

7. *Navarre*'s extended title, as it appears in certain manuscripts, makes explicit a conflictual connection with the earlier work, in the same way as Le Franc's *Complainte*: *Navarre* xxviii.

8. There is also, of course, the intertextual coincidence that both *Behaingne* and the *Champion* draw upon the little dog motif from the *Chastelaine*: see Swift, "Picturing Narrative Voice."

9. In his summary of Machaut's debate, Palmer inserts parenthetical remarks bringing out apparent incoherencies and irrelevances, reflecting this slipperiness: *Navarre* xxxi–xxxvii.

10. See Calin; Earp 210; Palmer, "Metafictional Machaut" 84–87.

11. This is a notable difference between *Navarre* and the *Complainte*: in the former, the author is engaged in debating the content of *Behaingne* rather than how it should be presented.

12. In addition, Free Will expresses appreciation of Machaut at two other moments: alongside Chartier as a proponent of true courtliness, set against the vicious Jean de Meun and Matheolus (*Champion* 6913–20); and in tribute to his rhetorical mastery as love poet, citing the refrain of Deschamps's *Deploration*: "la mort Machaut grand rethorique / Les facteurs amoureux lamentent" (18963–64).

13. "Coinage" in a relative sense, given the existing notion of *serio ludere* in Renaissance theory. Cerquiglini applies the term to the social status of poetry in the *cour d'amour*.

14. The opening line of the *Champion*.

15. Council records register his incorporation on July 1, 1440, and name him as speaking in support of Felix V on August 7, 1441: *Concilium Basiliense* 7: 194, 404.

16. Cf. Christiane Marchello-Nizia's discussion of the role of the dream-vision in political allegories.

17. Gaston Paris makes a point of Le Franc's youth in offering B1 aged 31 (*Complainte* 393); could the poet be evoking here a learning curve of his own having come with age?

18. Indeed, this is the earliest miniature to represent presentation of a manuscript to Philip: Wijsman 242n134.

19. As a positive counterpoint, Author commends Book to Isabel de Portugal and Jean de Créquy (*Complainte* 433–56). Wijsman argues for their active role in championing the *Champion*: 225, 313, 372.

20. Also *le bien publique/commun*; related, of course, to the figure of the body politic, a commonplace in medieval political discourse.

21. The prologue merits more detailed treatment, not least since it and *C* could be seen to book-end the *Champion* in P1 and function together as liminary pieces.

22. Interestingly, discussing the political potency of Roman verse satire, Matthew Roller notes that neither Perseus nor Juvenal "*explicitly* attacks or praises any contemporary figure who holds an influential position in government" (284, my emphasis).

23. One recalls, for instance, Dame France in Alain Chartier's *Quadrilogue invectif* (1422).

24. A reference to the poet's youth, if one follows Paris? (see n. 17 and n. 31).

25. The idiom *(avoir la) langue affilée* ("to be talkative") was already current in the fifteenth century.

26. Cf. *The Satires of A. Persius Flaccus* 1.107–10.

27. For glory necessarily ensuing from a thirst for virtue (see, e.g., Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* 1.38.91).

28. Cicero 2.18.43, for the relationship between *virtus* and *vir*.

29. The scope of reference for virtue is potentially vast; in the *Policraticus*, virtue is heralded as the greatest good, and is related to liberty in terms of free speaking (7.25) that could have interesting pertinence for understanding the role of Free Will and the response intended to be elicited from the duke in patiently permitting criticism in the name of virtue.

30. We may also note Author's specification that "one of my books" (*Complainte* 6) appeared to him, implying the existence of at least one other.

31. Such successful reception would thus contradict Author's assertion that he has never had the experience of delighting an audience's ears (*Complainte* 247), making the latter an ironic, disingenuous protestation?

32. For relations between the papacy, Council, and Burgundian court at this time, see Vaughan 214–16.

33. Of the kind we construe for Machaut–for example, when his narrator in *Behaingne* highlights his acquaintance with the Castle of Durbuy (1364–501), Jean de Luxembourg's historical residence.

34. This change may not, in fact, primarily be related to matters political; as Wijsman explores (223–38), there is little evidence for Philip's active interest in books before 1445.

35. *Navarre* is juxtaposed with *Behaingne* in all surviving copies that include both poems: Earp 77–128; see also Swift, "Picturing Narrative Voice."

36. Seven out of the nine extant copies are associated with the Burgundian court: Charron, *Le Maître* 195; cf. Wijsman 225, 242, 288, 372.

37. Grenoble, Bibliothèque Municipale, 352 Rés.

38. For *Navarre*, see Palmer, "Metafictional Machaut" 88.

39. Cf. above, n. 19.

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II

ADAPTATIONS AND APPROPRIATIONS

4

The Machaut Map

Geoffrey Chaucer, Christine de Pizan, the Diegetic Self, and Pre-Renaissance Individualism in Northern Europe

BURT KIMMELMAN

Discussing what he calls authorial "self-aggrandizement," Robert Meyer-Lee points out that John Lydgate, "on the threshold of his laureate career" and navigating the social and political currents of late medieval England, chose to model himself on Christine de Pizan, not Geoffrey Chaucer (61). The younger poet's casting eyes across the Channel for guidance was quite sensible—although "the understanding of the value of poetry [had] shifted markedly" in the Lancastrian court; he found himself in a time and place where "poetry" was being "valued by Lancastrians as a political instrument that nonetheless retained cultural prestige" (61). Lydgate might either succeed grandly or see his life end in disgrace, or worse—as if only extreme consequences were possible.

Given what we know of Christine's life and work, the idea that poetry could have served as a means for wielding worldly power might not have come as a complete surprise to him (as if matters of culture could have once been only, let us say, an afterthought). Surely, for her, art and politics became one, and it is fair to say that through poetry she managed to attain great social and even political stature, exercising a soft power as a political advisor of a sort. Her achievements were made possible because she came to be viewed by others, and to be used by members of the aristocracy, for ends apart from cultural affairs—as if the French court, in carrying out

policies whose nature we might today describe as *real politique*, had discarded the concept of cultural capital.

The great sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, whose thinking as regards *cultural capital* continues to hold sway since its heyday some decades ago, might have, had he paid attention to the premodern world, characterized Lydgate as someone who was shrewdly looking back in time to study his immediate predecessors—farther back still to Guillaume de Machaut, Geoffrey's and Christine's progenitor. All of these poets lived and worked subject to a patronage system that, as recent scholarship has shown, they exploited for their own ends. I cannot help but speculate that the Bourdieuan idea of cultural capital[1] was one not only the younger English poet but also Christine and Geoffrey understood deeply. As for Guillaume, if he did not invent the idea for the late Middle Ages—did he not at least give it its full articulation?

I want to distinguish Guillaume in the following way, moreover. The milieu in which all these poets wrote and secured a living was one in which they could also assert their individual identities and personhood (in some respects, *à la* Bourdieu) because they had to secure a livelihood as deeper external forces, encompassing the effects of textuality per se as well as literacy, were also at work, having been operative for two hundred years. Thus, it is interesting to speculate as to whether or not these poets' self-assertions, which took a variety of literary forms—the most important of which is the textual creation of a diegetic self, as we shall see—might also have helped them in their respective ways beyond literary circles. Surely this is the case for Christine. And, of all the arts, it had to have been literature through which persons could become political actors, inasmuch as, through writing, such persons could make manifest the very shape of selfhood. Writing—as Guillaume realized in a way no one had before him as deeply, not even Francesco Petrarch—posited identities that could be recognized within both social and political realms, unlike music and even the visual arts, because writing could describe, in fact could fully enact, an intelligence, in great detail and multiple dimensions.

Guillaume's work is pivotal in the evolution of the poetics of authorship,[2] and it is through the assertion of authorship that the assertion of personhood, of individuality, as an alternative to the anonymity of membership in the *communitas*, becomes possible. This evolutionary process

occurred over centuries, engendered by Christian dogma that postulated *text* as elemental in human existence (Augustine, for instance, describes all of creation as an unfurled scroll, his etymology of *text*, possibly inadvertently, positing an anthropocentric world, as Eugene Vance has pointed out[3]—much later Hugh of St. Victor describes the world as a book written by the hand of God [*Didascalicon*, *PL* 176.814, 176], while Bonaventure's notion of the Book of Nature emphasizes not the image of the book itself but instead, Ashlyn Pai maintains [7], the act of reading that joins the reader to it). Naturally, as it were, with ever greater regularity starting in the late eleventh century, writers insist in their poems upon their identities as authors and persons, at first surreptitiously, eventually quite openly.

In the case of Christine, she takes her cue from, most of all poets, Guillaume, turning her life into her text and vice versa—a diametrically opposite act to that of the stereotypical medieval scribe who signs his manuscript *Adamo me fecit*. The *Je* in "Je, Christine" is not any longer the empty signifier of the twelfth-century courtly lyric in which, as Vance and others have noted, the "I" is embedded in linguistic and rhetorical codes but does not rise out of them to attain true individuality (Vance 93). Her "Je" is a flesh-and-blood human being—indeed, a *seipsum*. With Christine this *I*, this *self*, is someone who enjoys an elevated social and in some respects political status even in the grand political realms where people vied ferociously for power and often, especially in Geoffrey's case, were imprisoned or killed for their trouble, and where poets strove to maintain an income and a sociopolitical position that might afford some measure of safety as well as dignity. Christine's singular achievement, built upon Guillaume's game-changing literary oeuvre, announces the advent of the modern world. How Geoffrey's work fits in here is important to consider in its own right; in any case, it is critically important in understanding Christine's poetics as well as her extratextual social positioning (as will become clear.)[4]

The emergence of humanism in the fourteenth century—in part accommodating contemporaneous theorizing and coalescing of a kind of selfhood that anticipated the modern world's ego—is signaled by a proliferation of biographies and even autobiographies. In this respect we need look no further than Christine's biography of Charles V. There are three

autobiographical texts concomitant with *Ladvision-Christine* but of them only Christine's writing shows any artistic shaping (Dulac and Reno, "The Livre" 202). There is also Francesco's *Letter to Posterity*, first and foremost overtly autobiographical yet it is brief, and, too, significantly, it is in prose. More important, what needs to be underscored is the fact that, starting early in her career, Christine's foregrounded inclusion of the actual details of her life in a number of her works, especially in her poetry, stands out vividly.

Along with biographical writings came portraits in painting—by the 1430s self-portraits—as a growing fascination for the individual, mortal human being becomes widespread; earlier medieval portraiture, what there may have been of it, was decidedly not naturalistic. New attention is paid, in Robert E. Lerner's words, to "the natural faculties of man" and a "faith in human abilities" (224). In both the literary and artistic texts there is a new awareness of a *self*—what, in speaking of self-portraiture in German Renaissance art, Joseph Leo Koerner calls "[a self-installation] at once as viewing subject and as thing viewed, as representation's origin as well as end" (9). In visual art the idea to install oneself in one's work, as it were, while being the center of attention, was just as central in literature, and it is difficult to avoid thinking of the literary projects of self-hood in one form or another as having at least tangentially instigated the visual projects. Moreover, we need only turn to the illuminations in presentation volumes of Christine's collected works (whose designs she assiduously oversaw) to think of them as prototypes for paintings to come.

In large, when we view a painting like Jan van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Wedding* (1434), with its clever placement of a mirror in the background revealing the artist himself (note the image of the artist is *not* central to the composition, upon first glance), we might think distantly of Christine's innovation of the mirror-for-princes genre beyond anything that would be merely courtly or formalistic, and also of Geoffrey's more surreptitious and apparently timid attempts to influence the political events of his time and place in a poem like the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women*, and, while more distant in time though less artistically distant, of Guillaume's mirroring strategies in a number of his works, the most complex of them being, possibly, the mature *Voir Dit* in which an illustration "recreates for us the image in the book that Guillaume was [supposedly] reading"—in order that, as Sylvia Huot argues,

> attention is focused not on the narrative action of the dit but on the dual significance of the illustrated text: on the one hand, the didactic content [and,] on the other hand, a referential series of verbal and visual texts figuring antecedent texts. (*From Song to Book* 281)

This arrangement suggests a mirroring complex of perhaps infinite regress (on the spatial plane and the temporal). Most of all, there is Guillaume's utterly original, ingenious creation of the mise-en-abîme device within a number of his works, which both Geoffrey and Christine study and develop further. This device exists apart from Guillaume's inclusion of an actual mirror[5] as well as plot elements that bespeak the phenomenon of mirroring, in a number of his poems we may understand as later attempts to develop the mirror trope, naturally coming after the *Jugement dou roy de Navarre*, his pivotal and monumentally original work. Among them is *Le Dit de la fonteinne amoureuse* in which, due to a "reversing of the roles in the *Judgment of the King of Navarre*," Didier Lechat has written, "we no longer have the situation in which Charles judges Guillaume, but Guillaume judging Charles."[6] The two men exchange their respective economic and social status so that, Julia Drobinsky comments, "[*A*]*lter ego* and opposite of the other, each itself contains two identities and two functions [together] in the same person."[7] In the *Le Confort d' ami*, moreover, Guillaume plays with the verb *rimer* "in order to signify [*designer*] his activity as a writer [*activité d'écrivain*]—especially with respect to the texts he says he's translating [*qu'il dit traduire*]—[as an] anagram of the verb 'gaze' ['*mirer*']" (Lechat 132).[8]

This mise-en-abîme strategy, manifesting itself variously in Guillaume's later works such as the *Voir Dit* and *Prologue*, helps me to make the claim that Guillaume's literary, revelatory strategies distantly sponsor, through Christine, van Eyck's (self)portrait. We might also see the use of a mirror or motif of mirroring as being not merely coincidental in a metatextual poem such as the *Navarre* (to be discussed shortly). Finally, while the poem can be taken as a transcription, we can read the *Navarre* today as an example of what we might call *cinema verité*—a rendering of the "real" turning out to be the moment when the courtly text is transformed into one truly interested in selfhood not merely as rhetorical device or element in a linguistic or generic code, but instead as a mode of writing per se comprehending the individual personage fully standing outside the

poem and needing not be, in order that he or she is recognized as that individual, also associated with that poem.

Nevertheless, while the *I* of the twelfth-century courtly lyric did not possess ontological plenitude, we do see in such a song early stages in the development of the authorship poetics and the first stirrings of what will become late-medieval selfhood. Sarah Spence, in discussing the phenomenon of the mirror in the lyrics of Bernart de Ventadorn, makes clear how it produced a novel notion of selfhood. Creating a variety of "textual doublings" in his lyrics, involving his beloved and himself as well as his poem and Ovid's, Bernart not only indicates his interest in the visuality of mirroring but also in "a textual mimesis" (105), as he pairs a *cobla* of his own with the story of Narcissus to be found in the classical text.[9] The very concept of the mirror, the sheer visuality of its effect on Bernart, leads him to create "doublings" in a poem where the artifact of the mirror plays a part. Eventually "the persona's identity, already doubled by the mirror, is further replicated by the comparison with Narcissus" (Spence 105). Bernart comes to think of himself as a nascent *self*: "Anc non agui de me poder / ni no fui meus de l'or' en sai / que·m laisset en sos olhs vezer" ("Never have I been in control of myself or even belonged to myself from the hour she let me gaze into her eyes"; Spence 105).[10]

Frederick Goldin asserted long ago that the courtly lyric depends upon a tension between a poetic self and poetic selflessness taking the form of a universal voice of desire—except that reflection disrupts this equation. In treating the twelfth-century lyric's "slow burgeoning of self-consciousness" Goldin points out that, as one particular twelfth-century story depicts, Narcissus "suffers some incomprehensible pain" starting "[f]rom the moment he sees his reflected image" (25). The fact that he is unable to "refrain from loving" his own image "reveals something of the origin of courtly love" (37). Goldin continues by observing that "Narcisus [*sic*] innocently reveals the simple explanation of much that is hard to understand about courtly love: '*Jou meïsmes me far languir*' ('I myself cause my suffering')."[11] Yet ultimately for Bernart "the self remains trapped in the exteriority of the visual" (Spence 106).

The later work of Guillaume, in contrast, presents us with a self tied directly to an actual personage, one Guillaume de Machaut, a poet like the persona in his poem and, too, who is in dialogue with Guillaume's actual patron, within the poem—"doublings" or even triplings are in this

manner no longer merely "textual." The *Navarre* not only includes all these elements; it also makes reference to earlier work by the actual Guillaume for which, in drawing attention to it, the Guillaume in the poem is being held to account. This fully fleshed out mise-en-abîme with its doubling or tripling are in effect translated into English by Geoffrey. And his Prologue, making reference to these writerly feats, is meant to influence the political events of his time and place. In Guillaume current events play a role, such as in the *Confort*, yet only as a substrate for other, poetic, matters. In Geoffrey this nod to patronage and politics of the day can be easily viewed as a characteristic of an evolving poetics that finds it full flowering in the younger French poet's work (while there is no direct evidence that Christine was aware of the details of his poem) where all the elements to be found in Guillaume's or even Geoffrey's mise-en-abîme constructions are placed in the service of equally serious overtly political criticism. This criticism is set forth by one Christine de Pizan who exists both within the literary work and beyond it, and who in her actual life has attained the stature of an authority through her achievements as a writer—and thereby as a thinker.

This set of literary strategies in the fourteenth and early fifteenth century not only represents the final stage in the evolution of the medieval authorship poetics that ushers in the Renaissance self. It also leads to, as I have been suggesting, both fictive and actual manipulations of patronage on the part of all three poets, while the fact of patronage has been necessarily woven into their respective poems. Guillaume takes a great step beyond the achievements of Dante Alighieri and then Francesco Petrarch. While Francesco, often thought of as the inventor of the self,[12] is ever mindful of patronage, including in his writing, the basic difference setting him apart from these northern European poets is their crafting of dramatic scenes in which their individual selves are asserted—a theatrics making palpably present a literary albeit in some outsized way an actual person, one that mimics court sociology.

It might be said that Francesco's energetic orchestration of his laureation ceremony in Rome was dramatic and certainly theatrical. Yet he is not creating that tableau on the page and within a codex although one aspect of fourteenth-century culture is the coming into fullness of the book as a forerunner in human affairs, a step onto the threshold of the modern world the three northern poets take enthusiastically. Francesco

does, however, theorize about the self—albeit in prose. As for Dante, he can easily be taken as Guillaume's model and forerunner, no less so Geoffrey's and Christine's. The older Italian poet's self-inclusions occur completely within the fabric of his poetry. Yet his role in the politics of his time, his exile and so forth, are not in any sense orchestrated by him. In any case, his textual pyrotechnics are extraordinary. Setting aside his *Vita nuova* that is comparable with Francesco's *Familiares* in its adoption of the rhetoric of careerist prose, Dante's tour-de-force self-insinuation in the *Commedia*, "io sol uno" (*Inferno* 2), as Allen Mandelbaum has asserted, adapts an autocitation strategy most significantly disclosed through this tripling effect; the trope encapsulates the singularity of the Dante pilgrim's circumstance:

> Lo giorno se n'andava, e l'aere bruno
> toglieva li animai che sono in terra
> da le fatiche loro; e io sol uno
> m'apparecchiava a sostener la guerra
> si' del cammino e si' de la pietate, [. . .]. (1–6)

> The day was now departing; the dark air
> released the living beings of the earth
> from work and weariness; and I myself
> alone prepared to undergo the battle
> both of the journeying and of the pity [. . .].
> (Trans. Mandelbaum)

The use of this triad is almost unparalleled. At least one of its sources is Arnaut Daniel's song "En cest sonet coind'e leri" in which Arnaut writes, "Ieu sui Arnautz q'amas l'aura" (43).[13] Something similar occurs later in the fourteenth century. The "subject status [of the 'poetic I'] is thrust upon us," Helen J. Swift writes, "in the three-fold repetition of the first person pronoun in" lines by Machaut exhibiting an evolving "'I-hood': 'Ce qu'ay pensé, voulez que je le die? / Je le diray, se g'y say assener' ('Do you want me to tell you what I've been thinking? I will tell you, if I'm able to find the words')."[14] Perhaps overlooking the possibility that the poet realized the serendipitous opportunity to go Dante one better by allowing the very absence of the pronoun—making possible an ultimately greater presence—Swift explains that "that explicit articulation of the first-person

subject of a verb is not mandatory in medieval French, such that repeated use of the pronoun may be taken to serve an emphatic function" (32n51).

All the same, Guillaume's lines exist in a rather different social or political context than either Dante's or Arnaut's, closer to that in which Geoffrey and Christine find themselves. Their incessant daily activities had to do with living or let us say working, in Bourdieu's (rather clumsy) formulation, within a "system of acquired dispositions functioning on the practical level as categories of perception and assessment or as classificatory principles as well as being the organizing principles of action" (*In Other Words* 12–13). At the risk of overly simplifying his description we might nevertheless say that, within this system Bourdieu adumbrates and to the extent that it comprehended "matters of culture," we find the effects of a given patron's "investments" to have been "not only economic but also psychological" (*Distinction* 310). In the case of Christine, a woman, these investments did not take the form of sinecures.

We see in the late medieval world the politics of poetry at work. At least in Christine's case we find the poetry of politics. Such a bimodal aesthetic system makes sense when we consider how "[c]ultural capital," as formulated by Bourdieu,

> exists as symbolically and materially active, effective capital only insofar as it is appropriated by agents and implemented and invested as a weapon and a stake in the struggles which go on in the fields of cultural production (the artistic field, the scientific field, etc.) and, beyond them, in the field of the social classes—struggles in which the agents wield strengths and obtain profits proportionate to their mastery of this objectified capital, and therefore to the extent of their embodied capital. ("Forms of Capital" 173)

We might amend Bourdieu's comments in noting that "the field" for these late medieval poets consisted of both "social classes" and political classes. Known for providing an analysis of societal dynamics beyond the scope of economics, Bourdieu's work alerts us to the crucial economic support these poets enjoyed; nevertheless, it is obvious that these poets influenced their respective societies, indirectly or directly, in ways beyond the merely material, and we can comprehend their contributions as existing within a system of support of them not limited to the material.

As they gained for themselves a livelihood they also altered the social,

aesthetic, as well as philosophical landscape of late medieval Western Europe, at times through friendships they enjoyed and nurtured. These friendships could be portrayed as such in their writings. The matter of these friendships is worth some examination—for surely, while the Bourdieuan critique of art and aesthetics (as in his monumental book *Distinction*) is unimpeachable, by its own design it fails to acknowledge the very nature of friendship—to the extent that, as if ironically, in the very attempt to exceed a mere economic analysis of life Bourdieu demotes the power of human relations and art both, even if the arts have been shown by him to have no absolute grounding other than through social relations. This important juxtaposition—of friendship and poetry with economic arrangements of one kind or another—is brought to brilliant light in recent scholarship devoted to Guillaume's narrative poem *La Fonteinne amoureuse* (1361).

My claim is that the *Navarre* (circa 1349) represents Guillaume's quintessential achievement notwithstanding the fact that the poem key to understanding his vast influence on subsequent poets is the later *Fonteinne*; it is in this subsequent poem that we find the exploitation of patronage fully advanced, especially through the *Fonteinne*'s iconography. Here we encounter what may be *the* iconic scene in Guillaume's oeuvre. The poem's narrative leads to a tableau in which a fictional Jean (the Duc de Berry, then Guillaume's patron) takes Guillaume by the hand, addressing him as "sweet friend" ("Dous amis"; 1272), as they stroll together on their way to the fountain. This *locus amoenus* is so serene it causes the lord to fall asleep, his head in Guillaume's lap:

Son bras et son chief mist seur mi
Et moult doucement s'endormi
Droitement enmi mon giron.
Je resgarday tout environ
Mais n'I avoit homme ne fame,
Se pris a penser a ma dame,
Et en ce penser ou j'estoie,
Qui estoit dous et pleins de joie,
Dessus li mon chief enclinay,
Pour ce qu'assez pas dormi n'ay,
Et aussi qu'il n'I ot que li,

Si m'endormi aveques li.
Mais einsois de mon mantelet
Le couvri pour le ventelet
Qui ventoit, car la matinee
Estoit pleinne de grant rouse,
Et le ruissel de la fonteinne,
De joie et de tristece pleinne,
Faistoit l'air et la verde herbette
Plus roisant et plus freschelette.
Et quant je fu bien endormis
Et de mon penser tous hor mis,
En mon dormant songay .i. songe
Que je ne tien pas pour mensonge,
Einsois le tien a veritable
Et bon, que qui le teingne a fable. (1543–68)[15]

Soon both have slipped into sleep, the poet slumped over his patron, in which a "dream [. . .] is shared by narrator and knight," as R. Barton Palmer has put it ("*Book of the Duchess* and *Fonteinne amoureuse*" 391). One effect of the poem here is the elevation of the writer's status to that of a personage, brought to completion through the temeritous implication of coequal cultural standing. That the poet covers the lord to protect him, indeed, represents graphically the reversal of roles, Guillaume patronizing Jean.

Deborah McGrady analyzes this poem in the anthropological terms of gift-exchange. Thus she takes us to the very foundation of cultural capital in the fourteenth-century aristocratic world. Quoting Marcel Mauss she writes that, insofar as it "joins individuals and/or communities in a 'bilateral, irrevocable bond,'" such exchange discloses "[c]apital" as that which "shapes social relations" (McGrady, "'Tout son païs'" 19, 28). Her greater point is that, by Guillaume's time, the tables had actually been turned on the patrons, the poets now enjoying what in effect was a seller's market. Guillaume can even mock his patron's obsequious pestering (other poets did as much). She alerts us to the term *commission* as key to comprehending not just Guillaume's poetry but also the literary, social, possibly political contexts in which it was composed.

How can a gift from poet to patron exist as such, how can it remain

as a *gift*, in a setting of explicit business transaction? The conditions of a poet for hire, as it were, are quite different from those of the proper poet who voluntarily makes a (true) gift of his or her poem or book of poems. Machaut has become that poet for hire, in McGrady's view, within a social and economic construct that is something more like employees working within a proto capitalist world, certainly no longer merely vassals in service within a feudal economy. This turn of circumstance will become all the more pertinent for Christine who, unable to secure any functionary position available to men, must invent her identity as that of our "first professional author" (in the words of Allen Farber [par. 17] and undoubtedly others).

How can friendship enter into this new poet-patron arrangement? Is friendship as a concept to be treated ironically, even satirized? To address these questions adequately the Bourdieuan sociology of art and aesthetics, and ultimately of power relations as well as economic relations—that which I myself have perhaps been privileging—must be somewhat qualified. So, too, must McGrady's nevertheless correct and indispensable reading of the *Fonteinne*, a poem that profoundly contains a narrative of friendship (as does Guillaume's nearly contemporaneous *Confort* [1357]). The socioeconomic analysis should be juxtaposed with a reading of the poem that does not preclude what philosophers would call the poem's *life-world*.

Surely an initial reading of the *Fonteinne*, therefore, would focus on a story unfolding in the real time of the psychologically saturated sensorium of being. This prima facie poetic world, let us say, is what enchants the reader first and foremost—the immediate linguistic and narrative beauty, and the music of the verses, per se. I would also submit that it is within this realm, in Guillaume's actual life, that poetry gets made; in other words, Guillaume de Machaut the poet and composer would have worked intuitively, synchronically, in an imaginative mode existing at moments quite apart from any cerebral operations. Creative expression, while it comes out of the person who understands intellectually what the sociopolitical and economic conditions of his or her world may be, manifests in a realm we might designate to be *lyric purity*. This is a world without calculation. In taking this position as concerns the genesis of art, however, I do not mean to say that a poet (or composer), simply for the sake of art, will not create literature or music or both that consciously

comments on the mundane events of the world at hand (therefore we can see how a generic mirror for a prince can become actual political advice). We may, then, speak of the *poet's genius* rather than, perhaps to tweak Douglas Kelly's felicitous phrase, "the patron's genius" (77).

Nevertheless, McGrady has her point. And the scene of the poet figure transcribing the story of the prince in the *Fonteinne*, which may be read as a dramatization of the making of poetry (as Huot has said ["Reading the Lies" 27], echoing Kelly), represents a poetic decision made intellectually by the actual Guillaume. The scene can be read, too, as an act of subversion. In it we appreciate the temerity of a poet's assertion of friendship on equal terms—a friendship that, in some way, even if only as depicted idealistically, is being dramatized for the consumption of a courtly audience. This complex of ideas is quite remarkable and, in its time, new.[16] McGrady ultimately wants to aver, rightly so, that the author Guillaume gets the upper hand both within the poem and in real life, with regard to his patron. In describing "the onus on the recipient [of the so-called gift] to voice his desires in advance"—as an element of what has become a patronage system in which poems are "commissioned"—she asserts that "Machaut rewrites the rules of gifting" through his "dismantling" of "the underlying structure of gift exchange by eliminating the possibility of an unsolicited gift" ("'Tout son païs'" 26). In the *Fonteinne* this factor looms doubly large, since the poem's prince gives away his possessions to Guillaume.

We can see how a savvy reader, looking beyond this story proper, would sense the prestigious sociopolitical aura emanating from it—inherent in the poem's aesthetics of enchantment. The fact that the story, with all its implications and emanations, could possibly have been enjoyed by an attendant gathering at its out-loud recitation in court, is of special interest. Where, from what or whom, did the authority of the poet arise? Where did it reside? The poet was flesh and blood but also a text. The fact that Guillaume will collect his poems and also oversee the creation of a volume, one in which they are to be arranged according his design, is of monumental importance not merely in literary history.

The single-author codex, its author exercising control over its physical attributes and presumably what we may think of as its marketing, becomes not merely a metonym or even synecdoche of that author. As was the situation for Machaut, Huot maintains, an author could have

been "profoundly concerned with the architectonics of the book and the orderly presentation of his oeuvre" (*From Song to Book* 283), at the very least. Through a set of practices, the codex becomes the object of authority, not just its token but authority's very source. Moreover, the poet becomes the book while, as exception to the vocations of predecessor poets, "the concept of the author corpus [becomes] central to Machaut's poetic career," Huot argues (235). Over time, as the physical, especially visual, especially aesthetic, even "theatrical," qualities of a book become more palpable, so that "the book becomes not just a repository of texts but a visual rendering of an integrated poetic system" (272) as well, it also becomes the poet, in the course of a poet's career. To borrow from Jesse Gellrich, in large "[t]he 'idea' of the book," as it comes down through time to Christine, by way of Guillaume most of all, is "an 'idea' in the broad sense of an inherited or received supposition about the *ordo* radiating throughout the physical universe and the language composed in explanation of it" (20). As such the book came to possess immense, mythic power. Its psychic impact was enormous, within the Christian ideological dispensation. To be sure, a hallmark of the medieval world, the idea of the book as such "[represented] an 'episteme' that changed radically by the time of Francis Bacon" (20).

Christine works at the threshold of the modern world. Accordingly, as Jacqueline Cerquiglini shrewdly comments, "the portrait she sketches of herself as a writer" is part of "how she in effect rewrites her life as a book" (265). For all practical purposes a writer for hire, intuitively and intellectually Christine shared with her contemporaries the broader Derridean "idea [of the book as] the idea of a totality, finite or infinite, of the signifier; [yet] this totality of the signifier cannot be a totality, unless a totality constituted by the signified preexists it, supervises its inscriptions and its signs, and is independent of it in its ideality" (Derrida, *Of Grammatology* 30; cf. Gellrich 34).[17] In her own time, as a part of the process of completing the evolution of the medieval poetics of authorship, Christine installs herself as the "[supervisor of the book's] inscriptions and signs" (see above). However, she has to channel the flows of power, which is not to suggest she was unaware of the fact that, as McGrady says of Charles V, members of the aristocracy were not capable of "[recognizing] the ethical and intellectual value of [their] writers" ("Reading for Authority" 177n22).

The codex, the principal object of a patron-poet gift exchange or alternately the fulfillment of a commission, a business deal, not only resides apart from the poet—the poet no longer a trouvère, no longer composing the mere lyric *Je* that is merely an element within a linguistic or artistic code. Instead, a real personage in effect resides within an object that is the means by which power and respect are transferred. The book has become the physical sign of cultural capital proper (as others have made clear, McGrady prominent among them).[18] As we may see in the iconic illuminations of Geoffrey reading aloud to a courtly audience, therefore, the poet himself comes to possess a double power, the poet existing both as person and ritual object. Here is Geoffrey's Machaldian inheritance, and it is what makes possible Christine's rise to greatness. She is not just a poet or even a political thinker. Rather, she becomes a fully acknowledged *self* such that would be recognizable in the world of the northern European Renaissance.

Machaut oversees the compilation, ordering, most likely the illuminations to a degree,[19] probably the actual production of his collected works, composing his *Prologue* written for the occasion. Christine micromanages the production of her works, her oversight extending to virtually complete control of illuminations. Over many years Chaucer works with Adam Pinkhurst, as Linne Mooney has shown, a scribe he addresses in the lyric "Chaucer's Wordes unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn" (97–98, 105), the two possibly involved in the creation of the Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts (97–98). Mooney goes on to tie them into the political machinations of the later 1380s and 1390s (105 ff.)—which figure in his Machaldian Prologue.

Looking at these three poets within the respective societies that supported them, we might begin to see how both they and their texts were treated as fetishistic objects by the nobility. These poets were far from helpless, however. They were, perhaps, like today's rock stars. Thinking of them as such helps us to appreciate even more Machaut's inscribing of himself in his work as a *poete* (to use Kevin Brownlee's distinction), an *auctor*—by extension as an individualized human being, a round character (8 ff.). Within this material culture of the book the basic structure of the codex, possessing an inside and an outside cover, possessing a visual text and at least an equally palpable albeit ephemeral narrative, could convey subliminally the idea of a poet who leads a dual existence within

and beyond the text and in both public and private realms, a poet whose subjective power manifested itself not only in the writing per se but also in the very material presence of the book with its attendant, surrounding rituals.

For Christine especially, composing a poem or book is part of a larger production or performance that is artistic, social, political, and theatrical, in which power is always being negotiated, even if only implicitly. A Bourdieuan explication of this dynamic might hold that in Christine's world "[c]reativity is defined dialectically in terms of how culturally ascribed attributes of creativity are valued and valorized in relation to social positions that creativity is partly responsible for creating" (to borrow from Edward LiPuma 18). With Guillaume, listeners and readers came to appreciate the enduring fame inhering in and being kept alive by the codex—in the gentlest terms, possibly gorgeously aesthetic terms, an object memorializing power, authority, largesse and likely wisdom, with nuance, indeed with devastating understatement. In some respects, then, we might imagine a gathering for a poetry recitation, in Guillaume's time, which would have served as the central event in a quasi ceremony of the sort rulers insisted upon not only for the sake of pomp and possibly sheer beauty—ritual, ceremony, also a key element in a larger exercise of political power, such that Bourdieu might have seized upon in explicating the web of a society's artistic, cultural, social, economic, and political practices. One outsized example of this complex of forces might be the pageantry signaling Isabeau of Bavaria's assumption of power on the French throne, its sublime magnificence there to be beheld; she "came to Paris," Stephen Nichols reports, accompanied by "more than 120,000 persons on horseback," these people paid for this service by "the queen" (11).

The codex was not only a means to a livelihood—as it was written, illuminated, dedicated, ceremoniously presented—but also a measure by which license was secured to articulate matters that were not to be automatically embraced, such as the status of women and respect for them as intellectuals and artists. The technological artifact of the book, which she exploited, legitimized Christine as an *auctor* and so she could advance her agenda. We might say the same for Geoffrey. Both poets "practiced their craft in political environments divided by dynastic struggles," Theresa Coletti observes. However, "in a more fundamental sense they inhabited very different political cultures." There were

> different ideological climates in which Chaucer and Christine wrote [and as] a familiar of the Valois household in her youth and the handpicked biographer of Charles V, Christine had reason to be more comfortable with the idea of monarchical authority, even as she petitioned princes of the realm to act more responsibly toward each other and France's people. (Coletti 27)

Geoffrey had to be more discrete (27). Both poets took advantage of authorial strategies Guillaume had developed—most instrumentally the creation of a diegetic self and the making of reference to its actual author's prior literary works.

While Christine's subversions of the patronage trope are more various, Geoffrey's are arguably at once more risky and implicit. His Prologue is supported by sober critical innuendo. The demeanor or behavior of the God of Love, who accuses the Chaucerian persona of slandering women and love in past literary works, might well have reminded Geoffrey's contemporaries of Richard II who was "famously foul-tempered," as David Wallace puts it (*Chaucerian Polity* 347), while Richard and Cupid are surely linked through Cupid's companion Alceste, who was to have been associated with Richard's wife, Anne of Bohemia. Obeying a logic holding that the "king, like the sun, is the vital presence of life at court" and therefore that "courtiers and subjects open and close like flowers in the light and darkness of his favor and absence," Wallace asserts that Richard was evidently concerned to have himself portrayed as "a dazzling, sunlike presence"—just how Geoffrey depicts him; "the sunburst, which adorns [Richard's] robes on his tomb effigy, was a favorite personal symbol" and, given such attention to iconography, "it follows that the poem's employment of the image of the 'dayeseye' might point to his queen" (355–56), while readers would also make the standard association of marguerite poetry with Alceste, understanding her to be figured as a pearl. The Geoffrey persona leaves off his books to go out to a meadow, inspired by birds' singing, and finds what "men call dayesyes in oure toun" (Prol. F 43, G 43). This is the flower he describes as "of alle floures flour, / Fulfyld of vertu and of alle honour" (F 55–56). Later Cupid and Alceste appear. She is

> [. . .] clad in real habit grene.
> A fret of gold she hadde next her heer,

> And upon that a whit corowne she beer
> With flourouns smale, and I shal nat lye;
> For al the world, right as a dayseye
> Ycorouned ys with white leves lyte,
> So were the flowrouns of hire coroune white.
> For of o perle fyn, oriental,
> Hire white coroune was ymaked al;
> For which the white coroune above the grene
> Made hire lyk a daysie for to sene,
> Considered eke hir fret of gold above.
> (F 214–25; cf. G 146–57)

Anne died in 1394 at Sheen Palace (one of the two residences Geoffrey mentions in the F text, which he deletes in the G text). When Richard subsequently journeyed

> to Ardes to receive his new queen from [. . .] Charles VI, he had his male attendants dress in [Anne's] livery [. . .], while he himself wore a hat of hanging [pearls, and] he gave the French king a collar of pearls from the livery.

Life might have imitated art here, and we might consider how intimately associated court poets could be with their patrons, although Geoffrey's poem might simply be "refining and recycling motifs and associations originated from royal circles" (Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity* 372–73).

Apropos of how she was viewed, however, it stands to reason that Geoffrey means to evoke Anne when he has Alceste come to his narrator's defense against Cupid's attack. Not long after she began her life in England, Anne "was pressed into service as a *mediatrix* seeking mercy or favor from the king on behalf of his wayward subjects," Wallace maintains (363). To be sure, her intercession could have been important in one special way. At the very heart of the Prologue and at the heart of the political turmoil of its time lay the concept of, the very term, *treason*. Kellie Robertson notes that the "1380s saw an unprecedented rise of politically motivated accusations of treason," which led to a number of executions (144). In specific, as Michael Hanrahan has detailed, a "group of dissident magnates, commonly known as the Lords Appellant, challenged" Richard's domination. Furthermore,

> [t]he struggle for power that characterized this period ultimately revolved around controlling the language and meaning of [the word] "treason," and, at the height of the conflict in 1387–88, Richard [. . .] and the Appellants each accused the other of the same type of treason, [that of] "accroaching" (usurping) the royal power. (229)

Given this tense atmosphere, there was an "interest in attempts to textualize internal intention," Robertson adds,

> alongside a growing conviction that it was possible to make legible a person's "entent" as it related to his or her daily actions. Rapidly multiplying treason accusations raised the question of intention as, for the first time, legal appeals could be based on an accused's intention rather than just his or her actions: for instance, the articles of impeachment against [the courtiers] Burley and Tresilian accused them of "imagining" treason and injury to others even if they didn't actually commit it. (132–33)

Did Geoffrey fear for his safety at the same time as he strove to advance his career as a poet?

When we read his Prologue we find that his persona

> repeatedly cites his own intention in defending himself from accusations that he has not [written] well [and] claims that the "entent of his labor" (G 78) is not to stir factionalism; rather, the poet claims that "myn entent is, or I fro yow fare, / The naked text in English to declare." (G 85–86; Robertson 133)

Geoffrey's narrator is accused of treason, of "heresye ayeins my lawe" (F 330, G 256), by a myopic and tyrannical God of Love (who reads poems like *Troilus and Criseyde*, which he cites, without nuance). Of course it is true that "[f]alse lovers are commonly depicted as traitors in love poetry" (Hanrahan 230). Even so, there is an abundance of evidence, which might help in understanding Geoffrey's decision to borrow from the *Navarre*, to suggest that he was creating a safe cover for himself.[20] It is not much of a stretch to align *treason* and *heresy* in one's mind in about 1385—the latter term thought of denotatively as "doctrinal error" at the least, along with as "treason to God" (Wakefield 2).

Christine can strategize in much the same fashion. Certain poems of

hers need to be considered for a variety of reasons; in the present context, one of them should be pointed out for its special resemblance to Geoffrey's Prologue in the present regard (as well taking into account the closeness, in some ways, of the English and French nobility). The *Epistre au dieu d'amours* may not be directly following upon Geoffrey's epistemological foray into the relevance of books versus first-hand experience, yet this trope may have been common enough in France for Christine to have been aware of and so to have adapted it to her needs. In this poem she spells out the need to respect a woman's first-hand attestation of the limitations of a textual tradition, one that is malignantly misogynistic and one that, she says here, encourages the deplorable deterioration of French life and thereby French honor (304–16; 417). She depicts, with cutting irony,

> nobles [who] share the news [defaming good women] in huddled groups
> In courts belonging to the dukes, our lords,
> Or yet before the king, or elsewhere spread
> Of stuff like that their learned discourse comes!
> Many of them should turn their talk instead
> Toward telling fitting tales without bold lies,
> Stories that show the worth of chivalry. (118–24)[21]

Moreover, Christine speaks of "women [who are] *loyal*" (433, my emphasis; "Car, quant ad ce qui afflert a amours, / Trop de femmes y ont esté loiales / Sont et seront [etc.]"; 433–34)—what in the Prologue Geoffrey calls women "*trewe* in loving al hire lyves" (F 485; my emphasis)—repudiating any implicit accusation of faithlessness; "it's no *heresy*," she maintains, "That God on high did [women] a courtesy / When He created them without those traits," traits she finds to be deplorable, which she sees in some men and also which "lead one into grave calamity" (trans. Fenster et al. 691–94; my emphasis).[22]

Conclusion

What has been said thus far in this essay, in sum, has concerned itself with a poet's display of her or his oeuvre and readership—also with the poet's concern for public adulation and as may have involved the vicissitudes

of patronage that, not least of all, comprised the foregrounded dynamic driving the poetic dramas employed by all three of our northern European poets, thematically and otherwise. Then there is Guillaume's contemporary, Francesco, whose life and writings, taken together, disclose this same complex including a tension, symbolic or otherwise, between book and poet. In his own way Francesco is instrumental in developing the literary genre of autobiography, having expended vast amounts of energy in self-promotion beyond the margins of his texts. As an influence on both Geoffrey and Christine, he must be accounted for within the framework of discussion that has been set out. As for Guillaume, we might just say that it makes perfect sense to view him as a rival.

In discussing the importance of Guillaume's development of the diegetic literary self, however, which plays a key role in the mise-en-abîme narrative dramatics Guillaume constructs (see above), I would wish to challenge the position the Italian poet enjoys within our collective understanding of the history of Western arts and letters. Dante has also been discussed, and we may rightly see his contribution to the evolving poetics of authorship as anticipating his younger counterpart—more so when we note the *Vita Nuova* as contrasted to the *Commedia*. What the younger poet manages to accomplish directly informs our examination of the French and English literature, also the phenomenon of poetic and political "self-aggrandizement" (addressed by Meyer-Lee, above).

The fourteenth-century European literary tradition, even including Christine, has been classified by various scholars as belonging to the medieval or modern era. In the early twentieth century, Geoffrey was thought of as a Renaissance poet; more recently the consensus has been that he should reside in the later Middle Ages (or the clumsily named Medieval and Early Modern period). Appropriately, Francesco's works are commonly held to have signaled the onset in letters of the Renaissance, while they might also be viewed as "medieval." The usual explanation for this asymmetry is that the values of the Renaissance took hold slowly and unevenly across various locales. While convenient, such accounting for the attenuation of the medieval world does not really confront literary and ideological elements these poets share with others like Guillaume, elements marking them as medieval but at the same time as uniquely of the fourteenth century—a liminal period anticipating the modern world, not quite of it, yet distinct from both its immediate and distant past.

I have maintained that the hallmark of this transitional period is a literary strategy seeking to distinguish the poet as a fully evolved *individua*l in the modern sense of that term, who is secured in the act of writing and in the literary tradition and who exists in the flesh-and-blood world, whose authorial strategy centered on a poetic persona to be read partially as a real person existing beyond the poem—certainly the case of Christine. Francesco emerges out of this tradition, enhancing it. Still, scholars of his work and life account for the rise of individualism as the consequence of a renewed contact with a classical past whose values are carried across a newly named Middle Ages or Dark Ages (thus a nascent, human-centered universe is posited, one beholden to values distantly espoused by classical authors).

Of course the rediscovery of the classical past has really gotten under way in the twelfth century, the beginning of that hugely consequential shift in outlook and aesthetics (when the first signs of the authorship trope appear in abundance—as Spence and Goldin have discussed, above). The truth of the Petrarchan scholar's supposition is not to be doubted; nevertheless, as an explanation it does not go deeply enough and does little to account for the peculiarity of certain fourteenth-century poems and other texts in regards to their distinct sense of writerliness and textual self-awareness overall—especially their overt associations of text with authorship, ultimately with the book.

This poetic conceptualization of self emerging between the time of, let us say, Bernart de Ventadorn and Guillaume, shows Dante and Petrarch to have been important way stations. It is fair to say that the actual author Dante turns the matter of poetry to that of poetry itself (the Dante persona a poet, Virgil his guide a poet). Francesco becomes his successor. In thinking about how he fits along the authorship poetics trajectory, it is worth considering a bit more the phenomenon of Renaissance biography that elevates its subject who becomes an actor in the world. Similarly autobiography—again, evident in painters' self-portraits—"[heightens]" what Koerner calls "a "fiction of autonomy [. . .] in which the represented person is also the work's creator" (9). This textual awareness of the creator is pivotal.

It may not be overstating the case to assert that for Francesco, as Brian Stock has put it, one's life is to be envisioned "within a literary career" (724). In Stock's view, Francesco "describes relationships between

reading, writing, and the self in unprecedented detail" (717), and he "is not alone." Along with "Dante, Chaucer, and other fourteenth-century authors," for Francesco "the philosophical understanding of the soul or self is complemented by literary understanding" (725). In this respect, Christine is the case par excellence—and through her we fully realize how important Guillaume was to the creation of a real, and textualized, self.

How well was Guillaume known in Italy or southern France? Was there, for Francesco, a shared sensibility to which the French contemporary contributed, informing the Italian poet's growth as a writer? This last question requires a discussion too extensive to be carried on here. What may be simply asserted for now is that there was what I would like to call the "Machaut map" by which both Geoffrey and Christine were guided in articulating the ultimate stage in the evolution of authorship poetics—not a "Petrarch map" although Geoffrey and Christine were well acquainted with the Italian poet's work. There is one factor in later medieval life, all the same, which comprehends all four poets and serves as the ground for a shared, larger, valuable critical context.

That factor is the increasingly outsized role the spread of literacy played in the evolving authorship poetics, which included improvements in writing technologies—hence the archetypal images of Christine in her study, a later iteration of a self-presentation we find in Guillaume. Given developments in reading and writing processes in the fourteenth century, Francesco's, Guillaume's, then Geoffrey's and Christine's, respective self-identifications as writers is a natural occurrence. In their time writing became entrenched in the merchant class and, as Harvey J. Graff points out, "[p]raise of the book as the companion to the lonely appeared as a new commonplace in literature" (88; cf. Larner 158–62). The actual performances of reading and writing, moreover, had become easier. Paul Saenger reports that especially in the thirteenth century the spacing of words and simplifying of word order and use of punctuation made for texts much easier to process (130–31). Thirteenth-century scribes had "created a separated script that was fast and easy to write on either parchment or paper"; by 1400 writing "had become fluid, standardized, and often highly legible," such as is reflected in "fourteenth-century miniatures [where] authors composing in the new cursive script were depicted in more relaxed positions" (132).

The technical changes spelled the development of a more autonomous author who was aware of herself as a writer and individual. The "new ease in writing enhanced the author's sense of intimacy and privacy in his work. In solitude—without the need of a scribe—he was personally able to manipulate drafts on separate quires and sheets" (132). Silent reading, furthermore, as "in the chained libraries of the late thirteenth century [. . .] was first made explicit," since it was necessary that fellow readers to the left and right not be disturbed by intoning words on a page—resulting in an "emboldened [. . .] reader, because it placed the source of his curiosity completely under personal control" (136, 137). To be sure, the silence in which readers nonetheless engaged written texts

> removed the individual's thoughts from the sanctions of the group, and fostered the milieu in which the new university and lay heresies of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries developed. These heresies were spread by the privately read *tractatus* as vehicle of intellectual expression. Alone in his study, the author, whether a well-known professor or an obscure student, could compose or read heterodox ideas without being overheard [. . .]. Private visual reading and composition thus encouraged individual critical thinking and contributed ultimately to the development of skepticism and intellectual heresy. (Saenger 137)

The opening of Geoffrey's Prologue reprises a scene typical of his dream poems: his persona reading by himself. The picture of him accused of heresy, of violating the laws of love in his writing and translating of certain poems the actual Geoffrey has *written*, takes us back to a similar trial in the *Navarre*. The sense of privacy in which an individual not only can think in unrestricted ways but also notice that he or she is engaged in the act of thinking about writing, thus in the act of constructing a self holding unique thoughts, occupying a unique subject position, is not to be underestimated. Here perhaps is the implicit suggestion in Boccaccio's imprecation, "You must read, you must persevere, you must sit up nights, you must inquire, and exert the utmost power of your mind" (*Genealogia deorum gentilium* [*Boccaccio on Poetry*] 62; Gellrich 45). In a similar vein, Francesco offers this advice in the *Familiares* (his letters, collected in the 1350s, overlapping with Guillaume's creation of the judgment poems):

> Finding in the whole world no place of quiet and solace, return to your own room and to yourself; keep vigil with yourself; speak with yourself; hold silence with yourself; stand still with yourself. Make for yourself at the centre of your soul a place where you may hide, where you may rejoice. (*Familiares* xv, 7; in Larner 26)

Reading in private, silently creating a text in the mind was, as Andrew Taylor says, "a specialized mode of apprehension involving the ability to dwell in sustained reverie on a text" (43).

What is the source of this reverie? Domenico Pietropaolo maintains, in discussing Dante, that "[t]o read is to let oneself be drawn into the space of textuality and, consequently, to enter a state in which it is necessary to respond with introspection to challenges of one's self-understanding and view of world order" (207). In the wake of William of Ockham and other nominalists' literal interpretations of a text, there was no longer a single meaning of it residing behind the words—a text required individual reading that could lead to individual commentary. "Questions about the world were being framed in the language of possibility rather than certainty," Janet Coleman notes (56). "To read is at once to focus on the work to be read, to muse on the thought of the self's role in that act," Pietropaolo maintains, and continues, "[t]here can be no reading without such self-awareness, no matter how faint the latter might be" (200). There are gaps in a text that a reader must fill in; therefore, there must be an "autopoietic self to do this," writes Horst Ruthrof (405). Indeed, metatextual activity—as exemplified in the *Navarre*—is almost impossible without reading (Olson 266). David Olson has shown that this is true of writing, an issue raised by our fourteenth-century poets. It grows inevitably out of a civilization that relied on textuality as a metaphor for the manifest world, Jesus Christ, and mortal human beings. Sometimes it is not clear that textuality was merely metaphorical.

Mounting literacy would give rise to humanism in its endeavor to recover a classical past in order to create authentic texts of ancient authors. Literacy was also important in creating individualism, specifically a self, insofar as that self was being understood as a peculiarly *literate* self and was being identified as such. This self who reads and writes contributes to the eventual blossoming of the modern ego. When the spread of

literacy is factored into a consideration of the emergence of humanism, what stands out is humanism coming to be seen as a milestone in western cultural and psychological evolution and is revealed as being consistent with a later medieval conceptualization of a person who is defined by values that hearken back to earlier medieval periods. The idea of *text* gives rise to an eventual selfhood that will be quite different from, for example, the concept of self as spelled out in Augustine's *Confessions* and in the secular lyrics of the High Middle Ages. Inasmuch as the late medieval understanding of the self begins and ends with a comprehension of textuality, this idea, specifically as it involves reading and writing, informs fourteenth-century selfhood and discloses Renaissance humanism as a gradual development that is as consonant with a medieval sensibility as with a modern one.

While humanism represents a major shift in our intellectual history, when looked at in hindsight it is also the most gradual sort of development, which suggests that the modern concept of an ego in existential crisis, suffering from the angst of identity, may not have been present in early humanism—although (*à la* Spence, Goldin et al.) with the advent of the twelfth-century renaissance we find poets ever more frequently and robustly coming to understand themselves as authors *and* as individuals, and portraying themselves as such. This understanding permitted them to proclaim their individuality that, first and foremost, was accomplished through being reflective about their acts of writing and the resultant fame of their accomplished texts. The modern ego, then, can be seen in the flourishing of a *self* already in place in the fourteenth century, as much medieval as modern.

Terence Cave has observed that Erasmus held a

> Christocentric theory of reading, in which the reader would ideally be transformed in the text and thus identify himself with the divine Logos: Erasmus here owes a great deal to Augustine, whose notion of scriptural reading has as its logical conclusion the disappearance of the reader as a "willful," independent subject and the epiphany of grace (*caritas* equals *claritas*). (150)

The juxtaposing of text and body was often no mere analogy in the Middle Ages, even in the fourteenth century, as Karma Lochrie and many others have noted (see Lochrie). This equivalence is handed forward in

time. The habit of glossing, so very central to medieval thought, similarly continues in the Renaissance. As Cave comments, "the humanist methods of philological and contextual commentary that are already becoming established by the end of the fifteenth century are also [. . .] deeply concerned with the activity of reading" (150).

Prior to printing, Seth Lerer writes,

> [t]he idea of authority rests with texts, rather than individuals, and it is this distinctive feature of pre-humanist manuscript culture that permits a certain fluidity among the author, scribe, and reader. Characteristic of the medieval habit of reading was, therefore, a kind of rewriting: a way of engaging with the text by commenting, recasting, and in some sense re-inscribing it. (12; cf. Patterson 149–53)

This dwelling within, acting through or interacting with the text, is the foundation of the metatextual writing epitomized in the *Navarre*. The metatextual impulse, furthermore, gives rise to literary biography and autobiography. Boccaccio's Petrarch biography, as Karl Enenkel mentions, stresses "Petrarch's literary works" (25). Subsequently Francesco's autobiography, the *Letter to Posterity*, will be a sort of writer's memoir. Taking its cue from Boccaccio's work (Enenkel 18) that "focuses on the *poet*, and suppresses and neglects many other aspects of Petrarch's personality" (21), the *Letter* supplies readers with a detailed, "firsthand and comprehensive" picture—the poet's "character, his physical appearance, his life and his works" (15).

It is important to note this emphasis in Boccaccio's biography, especially since it was "very much influenced by the recent coronation of Petrarch as a poet laureate" (Enenkel 21). Rather than the illustrious deeds of past heroes, or the virtuous deeds contemporary "treatises of rhetoric" stipulated should be mentioned, Boccaccio stresses literary feats (25). Francesco supplies readers with a detailed, "firsthand and comprehensive" picture—"his character, his physical appearance, his life and his works" (15). And in the guise of the modesty topos, the *Letter* leads off with an identification of its author as an author:

> Possibly you will have heard something about me—although I am not sure whether my petty, obscure name will reach far into either space or time—and perhaps you will wish to know what kind of

> man I was or which works I wrote, especially those whose fame has reached you, or, rather, of which you have heard the bare titles. (Petrarch, *Letter to Posterity* par. 1; in Enenkel 257)

While Geoffrey's Prologue is not usually thought of as being autobiographical, although it makes reference to its author (through Cupid's accusations), the poem is often thought of as being about writing and authorship. Its contrast to the *Letter* is telling. Francesco is blatantly autobiographical in crafting what, Peter Burke notes, "some historians call [an] ego document" (21). Its first person narrative refers to its author's life, his physical appearance and achievements.

Yet Francesco's other texts are what usually get discussed in terms of autobiography, such as the *Secretum meum* documenting an inner struggle (likewise Geoffrey's Retraction to the *Canterbury Tales* suggests inner anguish, may be viewed as an instance of self-referentiality). It is interesting, for instance, that Giuseppe Mazzotta's *The Worlds of Petrarch* does not cite the *Letter* when he proclaims that "[p]ractically all of Petrarch's texts, from the *Canzonieri* to the *Secretum* to the *Familiares* to even the *Trionfi*, are rooted in the analysis of the self and its opaque spiritual folds in the conviction that what gives meaning and value to experience is one's own self" (83). (He does devote a later chapter to the *Letter*, acknowledging its autobiographical nature; but the exploration of a self is seen by him—and others—as more substantial elsewhere.) In the *Letter*, however, its author identifies himself—just as the northern poets do—as an author of literary works, in other words as a writer. Mazzotta does say that "for Petrarch writing is a way of life[. . . .] a daily labor and a social occupation whereby he plays the role of a self-appointed custodian of private and public memories." It is true that the classical world can offer a model of a kind for Francesco's self-explorations, furthermore. Francisco Rico asserts that "[a]fter the discovery of Cicero's letters Petrarch incessantly asks himself 'quis sibi esset.' The *self* becomes the chief subject of his writings, the autobiographical spring flows strongly, and there is a greater awareness that 'qualis sermo fuerit, talis vita censebitur'" ("What is said, is, such is the life judged"; 57; Petrarch, *De vita solitaria*, in *Prose* 536).

Such comments need to be considered along with the poet's own reflections about the act of writing. "I write for myself," Francesco says

in the *Familiares*, going on to stipulate that "by writing I live longingly with our great men in the only way I can" (6.4.2–5; Rico 51). Does writing make communion possible—with the ancient authors, his contemporaries, and himself? This sort of comment leads Mazzotta to speak of what he calls "the jagged map of the self" (85)—the self as a writer and, also, implying the modern-like doubts a later medieval writer would have entertained in considering texts, their truths, indeed their writerliness, their representations of an individual author, and precisely their extensions of a self whose identity is that of a writer.

Therefore, we ought to consider their appropriateness not only to Francesco but also to Geoffrey and Christine, first of all to Guillaume. Do we see in each of them what the modern mind recognizes as an anxiety? That this focus on the act of writing would have been popular in the fourteenth century is not surprising when the role of literacy in fourteenth-century intellectual societies is taken into account. Both the Prologue and the *Lettr*—as well as first a number of Guillaume's and later Christine's works—are iconic of a phenomenon that could have been readily familiar to a fourteenth-century intellectual, possibly more so than to us today.

The continuing evolution of the authorship poetics will increasingly engender valorization of the status of *poet* in a manner commensurate with a grandeur not seen since Roman antiquity, such as in Francesco's 1341 laureation. It is fair to say that the self-portrayals in his writing implicitly posit him as the literate human being par excellence. Emblematic of this installation is that key event in the history of the early Italian Renaissance, as viewed by many scholars of the period. Francesco's coronation as poet laureate was the first real crowning of a poet in thirteen hundred years (occurring about nine years before Guillaume pens the *Jugement dou roy de Behaigne*, probably seventeen years before the *Navarr*e). There had been the coronation of Albertino Mussato in 1315 in Padua. The impetus of this event, though, was as much his scholarly and civic work (along with some academic poetry he had written). Dante was subsequently crowned as a poet laureate but only posthumously and not in Rome, the center of the civilized world (cf. Trapp "Owl's Ivy" 236 ff.; Wilkins 158 ff.)—and not with, as the 1341 event has been described by J. B. Trapp, a "ceremony and a grant of privileges which [would] set the tone for all future occasions" (239). Francesco, his oeuvre still spare, saw

his opportunity to engineer a ceremony and the events leading up to it (cf. Mann 46 ff.), including a three-day examination by Robert, King of Naples, just prior to coming to Rome for the laureation itself.

Francesco was someone who could be amazingly busy launching efforts to develop a public personality that would be enshrined in history, not merely in his own laureation speech and a "privilegium" he probably crafted, which came to be well known beyond Italy, and in a widely circulated although forged account of the ceremony proper. "Almost at once reports of the ceremony spread abroad," Trapp writes, "by word of mouth, we may be sure," yet also through Francesco's "own letters, poems and other writings; by Boccaccio and other faithful disciples; and by imitators and critics" ("Poet Laureate" 105). No fewer than thirty-one passages in Francesco's corpus allude to it (Wilkins 155). His was adept marketing, selling himself, his fame, along with it his self-description—not a false one—of a compulsive reader who always had a book in hand, of a voluminous and brilliant writer who, in Wallace's words, "slept with pen and paper by the bed and wrote on horseback" ("'Whan She Translated Was'" 163).

It is significant that his coronation speech depicts Francesco as a *poet*, a title and status to be elevated by the 1341 event and corroborated by later verses he would pen and shepherd through publication and seek to control afterward (what we see in Guillaume, Geoffrey, most comprehensively Christine). The heart of the laureation speech involved itself with the glory a poet could imbue within the identity of his nation through his writing, and it sought, in Alessandra Petrina's description, to "[give] European writers a right to aspire to a professional patent, and to identify their vocation with a required role on the *civitas*" (167). The "ceremony" itself, furthermore, was "copied by fourteenth- and fifteenth-century German emperors" (169). Seeing himself as the quintessential *homo scribens*, Francesco may have sought to be the Ur poet in a modern world—not a mere bard who enunciates his verses to a live audience, instead a writer who sits up nights with pen in hand in order to send his work out to a world of readers, to echo Boccaccio in his adulation of him—an image leading to Geoffrey's poignant imprecation in *Troilus and Criseyde*, "Go, litel bok" (5.1786).

The Petrarchan persona, the Machaldian persona, later the Chaucerian persona, all to be inherited by Christine (even if she was not aware of

Geoffrey's work), represent actual poets who are announced as such. This is certainly the case when Francesco is crowned as a poet in imitation of ancient Roman practice—not as a general, not as a scholar—an event of which Guillaume likely was aware when he sat down to compose the *Behaigne*, then the *Navarre* (both poems key for Geoffrey in creating the Prologue, probably begun in the early 1380s—in any case, the coronation is recalled by him in the Clerk's Tale).[23] As for Christine, her second ballad in *Cents Ballades*, holding Francesco up as a model for French poets, makes her point by citing the coronation. Lori Walters notes that in her "revised version of the *translatio studii et imperii* theme, Christine dares suggest that France follow the lead of Italy in poetic matters, and that Petrarch is a suitable model for imitation" (53).

One thing common in the literary events, real or imagined, of these northern European poets is a basic picture or scene in which a poet is being judged by an aristocratic benefactor, either overtly or by implication. The *Behaigne* is a love debate between a lady whose beloved has died and a knight whose beloved has betrayed him, the poem's narrative related by a "clerk" who, overhearing the dispute, offers to have the King of Bohemia (Guillaume's patron) settle the dispute. Guillaume makes clear his presence at the end of the poem where he includes his name, embedded in the text as an anagram; in order to see his name the reader, according to the persona's instructions, must

> [. . .] dessamble
> Les premier .vij. sillables d'ensamble
> Et les lettres d'autre guise rassamble,
> Si que nulle n'en oublie ne emble.
> Einsi porra
> Mon nom savoir qui savoir le vorra,
> Mais ja pour ce mieus ne m'en prisera. (2060–66)[24]

The debate is settled by the king in favor of the knight. In the subsequent *Navarre*—its full title *The Judgment of the King of Navarre against the Judgment of the King of Bohemia*—the narrator, a servant of love, is explicitly identified by name and as a poet, and is taken to task by a wronged lady for having written into the prior poem a judgment disfavoring the woman there; in the present poem the lady asks the narrator to take back the opinion he has had his character express. The Guillaume figure refuses

since, he explains, the poem has already been made public; yet he is found to be, Barton Palmer writes, guilty of "being disrespectful toward his lady, of promulgating incorrect doctrine, and of defending himself amateurishly and ineffectively." In consequence the king, "his judge," requires him to compose lyric poems "as penance" (Palmer, "Transtextuality" 292). In other words, the poet is taken to task by the king of Navarre (who happens to have been Machaut's patron at the time).

Especially as we might understand it within a humanist context, acknowledging the central position of writing in one's life not only accords Francesco the exalted status he advanced. It also allows us to appreciate Guillaume's great and unique achievement that transformed the making of poetry—an achievement that, arguably, for all of the Italian poet's brilliant theorizing and versifying, exceeded his reach. I would like to disagree with Sylvia Huot when, in discussing the phenomenon of a poet collecting her or his works in a single volume to represent the poet uniquely, she says that "[t]he existence of somewhat similar patterns of narrative and lyric compilation in different parts of late medieval Europe does not necessarily imply identical attitudes toward vernacular poetics or toward writing" (*From Song to Book* 332). There was a zeitgeist; literacy, especially self-conscious inscription, lay at the heart of it. I do endorse Huot, however, in her reasoning that "[i]f the vernacular poet is a writer, he can also be a producer of books; and if he is to write a book, it can theoretically be any sort of book he wants. Machaut seems to have realized this or to have seen its importance in a way that his predecessors did not" (235).

The French Poet's *Prologue* surely makes the point; in another way so does the *Voir Dit*. Yet the predicate for both poems is the *Navarre*. And the story of an author standing in judgment for what he has written, as before a king—that scenario to be found in the *Navarre*—provides a basis for Geoffrey's incident in which a queen, Alceste, must intervene in the comedy of a bumbling author having been found out, at first hiding behind some shrubs, by her husband Cupid—all of which, lifted from Guillaume's judgment poems, surely must be meant as homage. While Geoffrey's poem cannot claim the sheer originality we may credit to Guillaume's two judgment poems, the Chaucerian version is more pointedly self-referential, even as Guillaume's works serve to make the same general point.

There is a special significance within the predicament the Chaucerian persona finds himself. "Chaucer is challenged not only to show that his heart is indeed in the right place," Palmer writes. "He must also prove that he has the skill to manage his 'legendary' materials, which prove problematic, even intractable at times. The task imposed upon him, appropriately enough, is as 'writerly' as it is moral, certainly an improvement on Machaut's original conception" ("Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*" 191–92). Not only that: what is important to see here as regards the *Letter to Posterity* is the association of an individual with a publication history—an individual who in effect is to be understood as someone having the vocation of writer. What Francesco's work lacks, however, is the ingenious invention of the mise-en-abîme, even the mise-en-scène of the act of writing to be found in the *Navarre*, later in Geoffrey's Prologue, still later in a number of Christine's works (to be addressed shortly).

The fact that Francesco's work is not funny is another significant distinction. To understand the importance of writing in these metapoetical northern European poems, readers must realize the serious philosophical meditation they contain, pointedly within Guillaume's and Geoffrey's comedy—whereas how Francesco feels about writing is stated more forthrightly, for instance in a letter he sends to Pierre, Abbot of Saint-Bénigne. "The burden of the letter," Mazzotta observes,

> is to examine the poet's own vocation to write, and this vocation comes forth as a mania afflicting him. . . . To put it simply, writing for Petrarch is rooted in the universe of the passions, in an undefinable uneasiness and anxiety which Petrarch calls a 'sickness.' 'Except when writing,' he admits to the abbot, 'I am always tormented and sluggish, whence (strangely enough) I feel belabored while at rest and rested while at labor.' This ceaseless anguish of the mind is provisionally assuaged by writing, although in and of itself writing is not a cure. (158–59; *Familiares* 13.7)

Francesco's very life may be writing—while *writing, text, book,* all these provide Guillaume with the opportunity to explore the self in ways his Italian contemporary may have never dreamed of. Perhaps a facile proof of this claim can be that Guillaume's work is the more powerful influence on northern European poets like Geoffrey and Christine. For Francesco, Mazzotta comments, "writing occupies a mixed, liminal place: it is an

experience in which contemplation and action converge" (159). In Guillaume there is no convergence because his revolutionary self-assertions are organic manifestations of writing about the act of writing as well as about the identity of *poete* and, too, the book as alter ego. This singularity of persona and person, depicted theatrically in Guillaume, perpetuates itself in Geoffrey and Christine.

Geoffrey's stratagem of appropriating a sociopolitical situation—such as Richard's striving to maintain power—for the plot of his Prologue, in order to make a surreptitious political comment possibly regarding the obtuseness or ineptness of the royal rule, is a tactic he has learned. Christine will embrace it openly and vigorously, incorporating it within her self-insertions as a writer who stands at the center of societal affairs, beginning with her courtly, formulaic "Je, Christine," to evolve within scenarios like her being called away from her reading by her mother—that text she's reading the misogynistic screed by Matheolus she will attack in the *Cité des Dames*, giving rise to her pivotal role in the *Querelle de la rose*. She also duplicates the Machaldian ploy of making reference to earlier poems she has composed, and presenting a version of herself who must remedy past literary sins by writing future poems containing appropriate sentiments, at the behest of a patron, as seen in her *Cent ballades* (cf. Altmann "'Trop peu'" 233).

Christine's methods for moving herself toward the center of the literary or the sociopolitical arena beyond the perimeter of her text proper are various and abundant. In these, for all her professed adulation of her Italian forerunner and her call to French poets to look to an Italian poet for a model (rather than to her French ancestors or contemporaries), she closely follows Guillaume, emulating his poetics. She does all we see in Geoffrey's Prologue (or in a work like *The Deth of Blaunche* obviously indebted to Guillaume, in this instance to the *Behaigne*). Her fully evolved poetics of authorship is detectable even in her early courtly poetry. The *Cent ballades d'amant et de dame* in which her persona is ordered to compose poems as punishment for suggesting that ladies not pursue love (Altmann "'Trop peu'" 233) is prelude for additional innovation. More interesting is the *Dit de Poissy* wherein her writerly self makes several appearances, early on to introduce the poem and later to reflect back metapoetically on how it has come to be; midway the reader of the poem, who happens to have been her patron, is addressed.

Beyond this ploy what is especially Machaldian is the depth of characterization her persona possesses. Barbara Altmann has noted how in "her intradiegetic role" Christine "plans, and participates in, the excursion that the *Dit* recounts and witnesses the debate it contains after launching it by encouraging one of the characters involved to tell her" tale. She goes Machaut another step when intervening in the debate, the participants turning to her "in search of a judge to resolve their arguments" (Altmann, "'Trop peu'" 228). The poem's persona, remarkably having enlisted Christine's patron to serve as judge of the debate—"Christine makes sure," Altmann writes, "that neither the motivation nor the sponsor behind the work is lost from view" ("Diversity and Coherence" 263)—turns from her narrative to address him at about the poem's midpoint, so "to remind him, by stepping out of the story in an aside, of the charge she would like him to undertake" (263). What she says may be calculated to be read as an aside within the aside, as it were—she now stepping out of the text as a whole to speak to, or possibly merely to wink at, her literate reader:

> Et adonc vous, Sire, que je semons
> Du jugement jugier, entre les bons
> Fustes nommé, pour tant s'oultre les mons
>
> Estes ades [etc.]. (821–24)
>
> (And therefore you, lord, whom I summon / To judge the judgement, were named among the good / Although you are now / Away beyond the mountains.)[25]

Is her doubling here, in "jugement jugier," not merely a nod to Guillaume but also a tweak of his nose, in this brief yet attention-grabbing bit of word-smithing, on a par with Dante's "io sol uno" (above)?[26]

Christine far surpasses the reach Guillaume enjoyed in his poems, and Geoffrey, too, as Altmann implies when she observes Christine managing "a very clever twist on Machaut" in the *Cent ballades d'amant et de dame* by saying at the start that, "although she would rather be engaged in work of a more learned nature, she has been obliged by a noble person to undertake the composition of one hundred *ballades* about love" in recompense for advising "honorable ladies" to abandon their "thoughts of love" ("Reopening the Case" 151):

> Quoy que n'eusse corage ne pensée,
> Quant a present, de dits amoureuse faire,
> Car autre part adès suis apensée,
> Par le command de personne qui plaire
> Doit bien a tous, ay empris a parfaire
> D'un amoureux et sa dame ensement,
> Pour ebeïr a autrui et complaire,
> Cent balades d'amoureux sentement. (1–8)

> (Although I have neither the desire nor the thought / at present to compose amorous poems, / because right now my mind is on other things, / by command of someone pleasing to all, / I have undertaken to compose, / for the pleasure of someone else, / on the topic of a lover and his lady / a hundred ballads of amorous sentiment.)[27]

Whether or not this be impudence worthy of Guillaume or Geoffrey, it does not recall Francesco.

Altmann points out two ironies in this section of the poem. First of all, Christine "does not recant any more than Machaut does: while writing [amourous ballades] (8 and refrain) as a punishment for trying to turn ladies away from love, she continues to do just that with yet another example of an unhappy love affair." In addition, she turns a device of Guillaume's against him. "The second irony is that she uses Machaut's artifice in exhorting ladies to reject precisely the kind of involvement that he advocates and takes as subject in his poetry" ("Reopening the Case" 151–52). Irony, yes, surely—yet at times outright satire distinguishing the late medieval poets of northern Europe from their southern counterparts: the various twists, the sharp and subtle comedy, and so on, we should understand to have been a set of guidelines, a map for a journey into full-fledged authorial selfhood. Given the concerns invested in such a map, the material text was of great importance, too, and its existence was predicated by the writing. This complex Francesco and others from the south well understood. Even so, with Christine, the stature and power of the material text had never been greater.

Postscript

Exceptional note must be taken—apart from the verse and prose per se—of the attention Christine devoted to the creation of her works as physical objects whose very presence deepened the psychological (and possibly aesthetic) effects of the texts themselves. In accounting for the shifting balance of power in which the aristocrats of "the fourteenth century," having now "fully recognized the written word as a key source of power, prestige, and pleasure," McGrady reports on their resultant "demand for manuscripts," which was of such magnitude "that industries and schools introduced over the course of the high Middle Ages to cater to clerics and academics [had to be] expanded to answer the more profitable demands for books by court culture" (*Controlling Readers* 3). While Guillaume oversaw the compilation, ordering, and possibly production of his collected work that begins with *Prologue*, Christine exerts far greater control over the production of her works in all its details, her oversight extending to the determination of illuminations.

Guillaume had understood how visual art could "inspire new interpretations of established writings and shared beliefs," and he was aware of how "illustrations [could] shape the written word" (McGrady, *Controlling Readers* 107). Christine—to a greater degree than any English or fellow French poet of her time or earlier—takes hold of the entire life of her book, in a sense the book of her life, designing and seeing to the implementation of her works in an illuminated codex, making decisions over every facet of it so that the book per se would, with her, exist within the dimension of ritual or ceremony, indeed of pageantry, and otherwise in an outsized manner within a world populated by her patrons and fellow writers.

Consider the presentation copy of her collected works prepared for Isabeau (in about 1411). "The manuscript opens with a dedication addressed to the queen," McGrady writes in describing this offering, "along with a frontispiece depicting the presentation scene [. . .]. This liminary material reproduces the traditional components of a medieval gift-giving scene; through word and image, the writer subordinates herself to the queen, and the patron functions as inspiration for and judge of the creative enterprise" ("What Is a Patron?" 195). However, what this means is another matter altogether, as McGrady's analysis of the codex and its

surrounding mores reveals. Christine's writing is meant, in fact its ostensible purpose is, to delight. Thus, Christine's "dedication," McGrady argues, "situates the queen's pleasure as the driving impetus behind the book's fabrication" (195). Still, Christine's suggestion that the book was made for her patron is belied by evidence showing that, but for the personalized dedication, the codex had been already presented to others; in fact "the workshop responsible for the [. . .] compilation presumably based the layout and most of the miniature cycle on an earlier collection" made for Louis of Orléans (195).

The codex is a witness of "a changing patronage economy in which the benefactor's authority over the text is subverted in the name of the author's. In both her historical and fictional dealings with patrons," indeed, Christine makes sure

> the literary artifact as an object [is] intimately associated with the author. The dedication and several incipit miniatures [. . .] disclose how the author and her bookmakers manipulate conventional patronage topoi and iconography to enhance the author's identity. ("What Is a Patron?" 195, 196)

Only with Christine do we see the full exemplification of, in the secular realm and involving a secular *auctor*, what Jesse Gellrich has described as "[t]he bond between image and referent, signifier and signified"—which also suggests "that the structure of the summa or encyclopedia is continuous with the larger Book of medieval culture" (20).

Whether or not she thinks of it precisely as such, Christine is surely sensitive to the religio-intellectual tradition of which she finds herself a part, the history of her culture. This is an intellectual heritage, one she is determined to perpetuate in her life and writings. Hence it was important that as an author she was decidedly also a reader—again, here was a trope she could have taken over from Guillaume (possibly indirectly from Geoffrey); in any case it was one of pivotal importance in the misogynistic society she had to earn respect in so to make a living. Learning and thoughtfulness are what must sponsor her poetry as well as all her other endeavors, including the writing of her prose biography of Charles V and her openly political tracts.

"The love of study became the great love of Christine's life," Susan Groag Bell argues (175). Evident in the entire oeuvre, this love is signaled

blatantly by Christine's title *Le Chemin de Longue Estude* (173). McGrady writes, similarly, that "key to Christine's authorial identity was first and foremost her mastery of reading skills; before ever claiming herself an author, Christine shaped her authorial identity around her status as an unparalleled reader" ("Reading for Authority" 175). Ironically, to be the better reader, for her, was crucial in a way being the better maker was not, given the antipathy toward women among scholastics and others. In a poem composed for her, "Deschamps marvels over her status as a reader of learned works *and* as a producer of books intended for study" (McGrady, "What Is a Patron?" 174). As reader, writer, and book designer Christine brings to fruition the impulse first appearing more than a century earlier, to collect one's works that are meant to be associated with one's name. We see in the totality of Christine's output how "text and image work together to set the writer apart both from the learned clerkly figures she repeatedly challenged as poor readers of texts and events as well as from court laity," for instance in the controversy over the *Roman de la Rose* (McGrady, "Reading for Authority" 174).

A recent comment by Nadia Margolis sheds more light on Christine's programmatic construction of authorial identity—her writing aside—which was in part manifested through illuminations whose creation Christine supervised. "Her physiognomy" in these images, while

> pleasant enough, remains the same, as though her illuminators and other artists consulting those main manuscripts had developed a "Christine icon" for her portraits. What changes do occur are in the aspects of her clothing and gestures, intended to be more symbolic of her persona and status as author than revealing about her looks. We certainly have no hauntingly naturalistic portrait of her, or any woman, as we do of, for example, Charles V as painted by Jean Bondol. (14)

Nonetheless, might it be that, in orchestrating depictions of clothing and setting, Christine is able to turn the relative anonymity of a generic visage in these illuminations to her advantage, so she can establish a *look*, which would be associated with her, in other words a kind of branding (to use today's parlance)? What is clear is how subtly, thoughtfully, and thoroughly the scenarios are created.

Christine is depicted demonstrably as the sovereign of the written

word. For example in her Charles V biography there are miniatures in which, McGrady notes, "patrons and courtiers typically appear as listeners of oral readings or spectators before the written artifact"—yet these scenes "tend to reinforce Christine's intimate familiarity with the written word," as demonstrated in the frontispiece illustrating Christine's presentation of the book (discussed above). Likewise, "in the opening miniature to the *Epistre Othea* in the same codex, Christine the author retains exclusive control of the written artefacts held firmly in her hands" while Isabeau is not shown to be in physical "contact" with the book. Christine's strategy here is to have "the author-figure, through placement and comparative size, [dominate] a crowded court space." Just the same, it is the richly wrought book, its aesthetics aside, which physically governs the "visual space" (McGrady, "Reading for Authority" 164).

The icon of the book is not one Christine had necessarily to appropriate for herself, for her own ends, though she deepened the understanding and appreciation of the book in all its dimensions and implications for the people of her time; it is ultimately that icon, in its potential beauty as well as social and political, even economic significance, which best exemplifies her literary and public life. Her emergence as a political advisor in her later years is broadly indebted to the spread of literacy including among the nobility. It is arguably difficult to imagine how the book as presentation object in all its beauty, and invested with political and social influence, might not also have become possible as such, due to the contemporaneous social and economic change. "The quintessential outsider," Kate Langdon Forhan remarks, Christine "wrote a dozen political treatises that dared to instruct the ruling classes on how to govern themselves and their kingdom" (vi). Her authority was earned. It was the inevitable result of her prowess as profoundly innovative (and prolific) poet—the image of which she assiduously cultivated within and outside of her texts proper—as had Francesco and Guillaume, then Geoffrey—and it was the consequence of her sheer temerity and self-confidence, better to say self-belief.

Notes

1. "Cultural capital in its objectified state presents itself with all the appearances of an autonomous, coherent universe which, although the product of historical action, has its own laws, transcending individual wills" ("Forms of Capital" 173).

2. For the various usages of the term *poetics of authorship* and the development of the concept the term signifies, see various works by R. Barton Palmer, and my own *The Poetics of Authorship in the Later Middle Ages*.

3. In the *Confessions,* Augustine's sense of the eternal is articulated as a heavenly text, echoing Apocalypse 6.14; the created world is "spread out like a canopy of skins," deriving from Psalms 103.2. In 13.15, Augustine exploits the biblical interassociations of skin, clothing, scroll, text, and language. Vance writes that Augustine conceives of the mortal world as a "scroll of the firmament, a layer of 'skin'" (i.e., parchment as well as garment) on which "the primal dictation of creation is dispensed as a written text, as Scripture" (*Confessions*, ed. and trans. Pine-Coffin; cf. *Confessiones*; Vance 8).

4. The circumstantial evidence that Geoffrey's work could have been an influence upon Christine is compelling but not nearly conclusive—all the same, a good deal of his work would not have been possible without Guillaume's, and so we can usefully situate the English poet's body of work within the literary evolution under discussion here, which I am saying is reconceived by Guillaume. I would also ask that we consider Geoffrey as part of a hypothetical, better to say a theoretical, triangulation I am proposing, which can be of great use in appreciating Christine's inventive and great work.

5. Cf. Emma Cayley: "Machaut sets the physical image of the mirror within the second *jugement* poem [*Le Jugement dou roy de Navarre*], where it stands as a metaphor for the reflexivity of the two [judgment] poems [the other being the earlier *Jugement dou roy de Behaigne*]" (114).

6. My translation. Guillaume "renverse les rôle du *Jugement dou Roy de Navarre,* nous n'avons plus affaire à Charles juge de Guillaume, mais à Guillaume juge de Charles" (*Dire par fiction* 134).

7. My translation. "*Alter ego* et contraire de l'autre, chacun porte finalment deux identités et deux fonctions en lui-même" (Drobinsky, "Effets de Miroir" 268).

8. My translation. "pour designer son activité d'écrivain—surtout à propos des texts qu'il dit traduire—est une anagramme du verbe 'mirer'" (Lechat 132).

It is also no mere coincidence that in Guillaume's time and continuing on through the fifteenth century, the technology of the mirror was being greatly refined. Indeed, mirrors were being improved even as early as the twelfth century, with a more efficacious use of flat glass with a shiny metal backing. This is to be contrasted to, say, a convex mirror, extant when mirrors for princes—such as those by John of Salisbury in the *Policraticus,* and a century later Brunetto Latini's *Li Livres dou Tresor* are written, which surely engendered, even if only distantly, later poems, and the *Fonteine amoureuse* and later works, to be followed by his *Prologue* to his collected works. Yet what is important to see here is how Guillaume created a world within a world in his poetry.

9. "Bernart's appearance in the visible register of his poems suggests an acceptance of sight and the physical world that is an important stage in the development of the early self. Amidst the anxiety Bernart projects throughout his lyrics one finds an appreciation of the visible as related to an inchoate sense of the self" (Spence 104).

10. "Can vei la lauzeta mover" lines 17–19; Ventadorn, ed. Nichols and Galm, 166, 168.

11. Goldin 37. See also *Narcisus (poème du XIIe siècle)* 916.

12. "Petrarch represents a nodal point in the articulation of what we now call the early modern period [. . .] as the inventor of the modern self" (Brose 943).

13. See Mandelbaum's essay "Taken from Brindisi" (232–33) for an illuminating discussion of this figure in the *Commedia* and in reference to Virgil.

14. The lines' attribution is questionable, however (Swift 32).

15. "He leaned his arm and head on me / And very softly fell asleep / Right in my lap. / I looked around, / But there was no one present, man or woman, / And I began thinking about my lady, And as I thought about her, / Sweetly and full of joy, / I lay my head on top of him / For I hadn't slept enough, / And also because he was the only one there, / And so I slept along with him. / But first I covered him / With my cloak because of the breeze / Which then was blowing, for the morning / Was heavy with dew, / And the fountain stream, / Which was filled with joy and sadness, / Made the air and green grass / More dewy and fresh smelling. / And after I had fallen deep asleep, Far removed from all my cares, I dreamed a dream in my sleep / That I don't consider false, / But think to be true / And good, whoever might call it a fable" (ed. and tr. Barton Palmer, 170–73).

16. As I have suggested, in comparison, Francesco expresses this sort of patron-poet relationship in writing, although in a personal letter, only long after its writing is made public. Just the same, it is worth thinking about how unusual such an act may have been in his time, even accounting for the long-term relationship he enjoyed with his patron and the formally religious framework of it, which may have conditioned their exchanges (Francesco having been a religious for quite a while). While Wojciehowski takes pains to make clear that his relationship with Cardinal Giovanni Colonna was "perhaps more like a father-son bond" (283), in one letter Francesco addresses "the Cardinal in familial terms that emphasize the authority and status of his patron (*pater*)," only to shift to language that "infantilizes the Cardinal, casting himself in the role of comforting nurse" (284).

Below I will be contrasting this stance with the kind taken by Guillaume, Geoffrey, and Christine, to make the larger point about how, unlike Francesco, they sought through dramatizations to subvert the received readings of their relationships with their patrons and generally their betters, knowing that their poems were to be made public at the time they were being written. Through such dramatic

rhetoric, which develops out of the mise-en-abîme scenario in the *Navarre*, they advance the humanist value of individuality, which Francesco mostly theorizes in prose albeit some of that writing is blatantly autobiographical.

17. I cannot help but imagine Derrida having the image of Isidore's encyclopedia before him as he wrote.

18. Cf. McGrady "'Tout son païs'" as well as "Reading for Authority" and "Machaut and His Material Legacy."

19. See McGrady's "Machaut and His Material Legacy" for the latest presentation of the relevant evidence and its analysis.

20. Hanrahan's extensive contextualization of Geoffrey's Prologue makes this point conclusively:

Richard's neglect of his royal duties led Parliament to threaten him with [a] deposition [. . .] if he continued to alienate himself from his people and persisted in willfully disregarding the laws, statutes, and ordinances of the land. This alleged threat captures the tenor of the subsequently assembled Wonderful Parliament, during which Richard was compelled to abandon temporarily the counsel of his favorites (234).

The fact that Geoffrey was in attendance at this session of the parliament is not without its significance. Alceste's argument can be read as a reflection of the anxiety there, and her point "that the report of" the Geoffrey figure's "unworthiness is the invention of Love's envious courtiers" certainly bears out such a reading, given many events of this time (ably analyzed by Hanrahan 234–35 ff.). In this regard, to borrow from Staley, we can see Chaucer's poem as a "public [form] of address that [is] meant to be overheard, if not completely understood, by the mighty" (2). With terminology such as *intent* and *treason*, used at turns in the poem, being legally and hotly debated in England, such as Robinson amply demonstrates, a reader at the time might very well have had a palpable sense of how edgy Geoffrey was being when he has his persona stand accused of *heresy* (cf. F 330, G 256).

21. "Et les nobles font leurs pars et leurs sernes / En ces grans cours de noz seigneurs les ducs / Ou chieux le roy, ou ailleurs espandus, / Et la tienent de telz plais leurs escoles. / Pluseurs y a qui deussent leurs paroles / En bons contes drecier sanz bourderie / A raconter pris de chevalerie" (118–24; Bibliotheca Augustana, online).

22. "Si n'en aront, n'en peine ne en coylpe / Punicion puis qu'elles n'y ont coulpe, / Dont dire puis, ce n'est pas heresie, / Que moult leur fist le hault Dieu courtoisie / D'elles fourmer sanz les condicion / Qui mettent gent a griefs perdisions" (693–98, Bibliotheca Augustana, online).

23. "Fraunces Petrak, the lauriat poete, / Highte this clerke, whos rethorike sweete / Enlumyned al Ytaille of poetrie" (Clerk's Tale 4.31–33).

24. "[. . .] remove / The first seven syllables from the whole [of the poem's last

verse] / And reassemble them in another fashion, / Forgetting or omitting none. / In this way, whoever / Wants to learn my name will be able to, / Though he will not esteem me more" (2060–66, trans. Altmann and Palmer, *An Anthology of Medieval Debate Poetry*; text in *The Judgment of the King of Bohemia*, ed. and trans. Palmer).

25. I want to express my gratitude to Sarah White for her rendering here.

26. I realize that a goal of Altmann's has been, for instance in her essay "Diversity and Coherence in Christine de Pizan's *Dit de Poissy*," to rescue Christine from the clutches of earlier commentators who saw her as merely a hack carrying forth profound Machaldian innovations; to do so Altmann must show the differences in the work of Christine and Guillaume (see, e.g., "'Trop peu'" 220). What my essay wishes to do is to establish, beyond what Altmann and others have accomplished, Christine as a poet who most deeply understood those innovations. Thus, it is not finally a matter of creating permutations of them, for her.

27. Once again, I am most grateful to Sarah White for her generosity, her time, and her expertise, in helping me instrumentally with this translation.

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5

True Colors

The Significance of Machaut's and Chaucer's Use of Blue to Represent Fidelity

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In one of Guillaume de Machaut's lyrics, a jilted lover laments his lady's unfaithfulness with the refrain: "Qu'en lieu de bleu, dame, vous vestez vert" ("instead of blue, lady, you dress in green").[1] Machaut's *Livre dou Voir Dit* offers the same metaphor: suspecting his love, Toute Belle, of infidelity, Guillaume dreams that the image of Toute Belle, in a portrait that he keeps of her, has turned its face away from him and that its dress has turned from blue to green. This use of color to represent a lover's behavior, where blue and green are given moralistic connotations, is also found in the work of Geoffrey Chaucer.

For example, in Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*, Canacee finds a wounded bird that has been abandoned by her lover. Canacee builds the bird a small enclosure that she lines on the inside with blue velvet "in signe of *trouthe* that is in wommen sene" ("as a sign of truth observed in women"; line 645, emphasis added).[2] On the outside, the enclosure is painted green with images of "false fowles" ("false fowls"; line 647) who abandon their mates. In Chaucer's *Anelida and Arcite*, meanwhile, the cheating Arcite is described as having a "newe and grene" ("new and green"; line 180) heart. When Arcite appears to the sorrowing Anelida in a dream to proffer her his faithful love, he is "clad in asure" ("dressed in blue"; line 330). Further, in the lyric *Against Women Unconstant*, that is attributed to Chaucer, the male speaker reproaches his lady for her "unstedfastnesse" (line 3),

adding in the refrain: "In stede of blew, thus may ye were al grene" ("instead of blue, thus let you be dressed all in green").

Chaucer likely derives his use of this blue-green imagery from his illustrious French contemporary, given the latter poet's extensive literary influence over much of Chaucer's corpus.[3] As I will show, however, the two poets' reliance on the same metaphor can illuminate more than just vectors of literary influence. I read Machaut's and Chaucer's use of the blue-green color metaphor as a joint engagement with contemporary historical developments within heraldry that affected the closely linked courtly circles of both poets. By imagining a world in which infidelity may be rendered externally legible through color, Machaut and Chaucer play out the fantasy that identity may be governed by a stable text.

Offering a real-life rendition of the same fantasy, heraldry promises a clear semiotic system, in which every member of the nobility may be readily visually identified by his or her personal sign. The social realities of the late fourteenth century, however, failed in delivering this promise. Machaut's and Chaucer's historical period saw a marked surge in people claiming armigerous status, leading to a concomitant increase in the number of newly minted members of the nobility who, whether intentionally or accidentally, assumed coats of arms that already had previous owners, resulting in widespread cases of mistaken chivalric identity. Lawsuits over one's original right to a coat of arms, known as armorial bearings disputes, were brought before judges so often in the second half of the fourteenth century that special courts emerged specifically to handle this burgeoning area of jurisprudence. Chaucer himself was a witness in one of the longest and most famous of such cases, *Scrope v. Grosvenor* (1385–91).

I argue that Machaut's and Chaucer's use of this strange color metaphor to explore issues surrounding the legibility of identity responds to the contemporary phenomenon of late medieval armorial bearings disputes, in which public personal identity was critically dependent on a semiotic text in crisis. The first part of this piece reads Chaucer's testimony in *Scrope v. Grosvenor*—delivered by Chaucer in French—in order to show that Machaut's and Chaucer's shared late medieval aristocratic culture understood identity to be constituted through social reputation *in the eyes of the law*. I thus reveal a new, historical context for understanding the two poets' focus on fame and authorial reputation in their work. The latter part of the piece examines contemporary legal treatises about this

type of juridical proceeding. Demonstrating how these treatises explicitly link armorial bearings disputes to nascent intellectual property rights, I show that, for Machaut specifically, the blue-green color metaphor figures concerns surrounding the ability to have personal control over one's authorial reputation. Meanwhile, Chaucer's reliance on heraldic imagery in another key work, *The House of Fame*, reveals that he, too, draws on the historical connection between armorial bearings disputes and intellectual property rights in order to express his own anxieties over the establishment of vernacular authorial identity in the late medieval period.

"Coloring Fidelity"

Machaut and Chaucer both imagine a lover's infidelity as capable of leaving a discernible, if frustratingly unstable, marking on the physical body. In the *Squire's Tale*, the lovelorn falcon, who has been abandoned by her unfaithful mate, explains to Canacee that "depe in greyn he dyed his coloures" ("deep in a fast dye he disguised his colors"; line 511). She further describes him as having perfectly painted and arranged "as wel his words as his countenance" ("his words as much as his face"; line 561). By masking his true colors through paint and dye, the unfaithful mate renders himself illegible as a potential adulterer. Moved by the falcon's suffering, Canacee commissions her servants to create a small enclosure, blue on the inside and green on the outside, to house the wounded bird. By literally keeping green infidelity outside of the blue safe space of healing, Canacee's decorating schema seeks to redress the semiotic crisis produced by the false male bird, whose fake paint has veiled his true identity. The falcon's enclosure represents a miniaturized ideal world in which signs have clear meanings that are spatially codified in relation to each other.[4]

Like the unfaithful partner who conceals his true self by means of false outward appearance, Arcite also hides his true colors in *Anelida and Arcite*, for Anelida, of course, cannot physically see the green perfidy of Arcite's heart. Arcite's pledge of faithful love is at one point visually confirmed by his external appearance, when he appears before Anelida to ask her for a second chance, "clad in asure" ("dressed in blue"; line 330) as if in token of his newfound fidelity. This brief moment, however, in which the external sign seems just about to deliver on its promised meaning, takes

place within a dream. Arcite's behavior can thus only be guaranteed by his external appearance within the space of Anelida's reverie; in real life, the outward sign is revealed to be always at least potentially misrepresenting the lover's true nature.

If Chaucer can at least conceive of a space, however remote and contingent, in which infidelity could be found out by means of its green color and in which the color blue could serve as a testament to fidelity, Machaut's *Voir Dit* seems even more determined to expose any moment of semiotic success as purely illusory. Guillaume suspects his lady, Toute Belle, of infidelity and dreams that her portrait has changed colors from blue to green.[5] Guillaume's subsequent attempts to ascertain whether his dream can be taken as sure proof of his lady's infidelity, however, result in a breakdown of all possible modes of authoritative discourse with significant ramifications for the rest of the narrative. After observing the portrait change its color from blue to green, Guillaume, still within his dream, leaves the room with the portrait and finds himself in a garden where a group of courtiers play a game called Roi-qui-ne-ment (literally, "the King Who Does Not Lie"), in which they address requests to a wreathed man, never identified by name, sitting elevated from the rest of the group.[6] When Guillaume's turn to play comes, he explains his strange experience with the color-changing portrait and asks the "king" how he should interpret such a metamorphosis. In response, the "king" questions everything that Guillaume has said and offers no clear answers (lines 5605–10):

. . . Biaus amis cest grant nicete	Sweet friend, it's great foolishness
Dou penser · car il le te samble	To have such a thought, for, so it seems to you,
Tu dors · et paroles ensamble	You're sleeping and talking at the same time.
Et si mest avis que tu songes	You're dreaming, such is my view,
On ne doit pas croire ses songes	And no one should believe his dreams.[7]

The "king" goes on to doubt whether such metamorphoses are even possible and warns Guillaume against making false accusations (lines 5611–16). He concludes by suggesting that Guillaume is either experiencing an attack of melancholy that is causing him to imagine things or else

perhaps that it is Guillaume who is being unfaithful and telling lies about the portrait's color change (lines 5691–92).

Every element in this scene contributes to the thorough destabilization of both characters' attempts at authoritative discourse. The testimony of Guillaume's personal experience is instantly discredited: the event itself—namely, the portrait's color change—is deemed improbable, and he is generally judged to be fundamentally misrepresenting the facts of what has happened, at best seeing what is not there and at worst giving false witness. He is even told—within his own dream—that he is dreaming. The persona rendering this judgment, however, is hardly in any authoritative position himself. This "king" is an unnamed figure existing within the suspended world of the interpolated dream vision. Whatever authority he might have within this dream world is a priori put to question by the circumscribed space of the Roi-qui-ne-ment game, within which and only within which he has acquired his authoritative position. Whatever judgment the "king" is passing on Guillaume's testimony, it is coming from a place of contingent, ephemeral authority that only holds meaning within the space of game and dream. Neither Guillaume's experience nor the judgment of this pseudo-sovereign can provide us with a satisfactory answer as to what the portrait's color change symbolizes and whether, even, it has actually taken place.

As readers, we likewise never learn the truth of what this portrait's metamorphosis really signifies, if anything. When Guillaume wakes up and looks at the portrait again, he finds Toute Belle's image smiling, but, significantly, Machaut says nothing concerning whether it has changed back to blue or remains green (lines 5815–20). This startling omission, after a lengthy scene devoted to the portrait's color change, emphasizes the image's failure to produce legible meaning, whether to its owner or to an external judge. The scene's lack of clear resolution goes on to haunt Guillaume's subsequent interactions with Toute Belle. Their relationship degenerates into a set of accusations of infidelity from him and unsuccessful assurances of faithful love from her that Guillaume believes briefly, only to succumb to more suspicions. Whether the portrait's color change is actually symbolic of Toute Belle's true behavior is never satisfactorily determined, so that the act of reading the sign fails on all possible levels. Both Chaucer and Machaut thus toy with the possibility that an external sign

might be used to identify infidelity, but the success of that representation is variously thwarted in their narratives. Instead, the attempt to represent the "true self" by means of color continually ushers in crises of textual interpretation.

An earlier work by Machaut, *Le Remede de Fortune*, suggests that the origins of this blue-green color metaphor are rooted in contemporary heraldry, that is, in the adoption of coats of arms to signify one's noble status. In the *Remede*, Esperance explains to Amant the symbolic meaning of the colors in Love's coat of arms: the blue, she explains, stands for loyalty; red for pure love; white for joy; black for grief; yellow for falsehood; and, significantly, green again for fickleness (lines 1895–1910).[8] These kinds of symbolic taxonomies for the colors on a coat of arms were a standard feature of late medieval heraldic treatises, such as Bartolo da Sassoferrato's *De insigniis et armis* (written in Italy in 1357), Honoré Bonet's (or Bouvet's) *L'Arbre des batailles* (French, c. 1387), and Christine de Pizan's *Livre des fais d'armes et de chevalerie* (French, c. 1409), though, significantly, green is absent in all three. Johannes de Bado Aureo's *Tractatus de armis*, however, written in England in circa 1394 and dedicated to Anne of Bohemia, devotes substantial space to the color green. According to Bado Aureo, green has entered heraldry ignobly "ab aliquo milite, histrione vel gaudente, qui nobiles non sunt" ("from some kind of base soldier, actor or reveler; these are not noble"). Green is not to be found among traditional English coats of arms, Bado Aureo goes on to say, and thus he is ashamed even to include the color within his own taxonomy since the authors of heraldic treatises before him have considered it "absurdus" ("out of place") and "inconveniens" ("unsuitable").[9] Bado Aureo's association of the color with lowly, popular entertainment and impurity suggests a contemporary cultural association between green and moral laxity.[10] Machaut's and Chaucer's choice of green to represent the problem of infidelity thus speaks to the negative role of the color within contemporary armorial culture. A closer look at late medieval heraldry as a semiotic system for producing and confirming an individual's identity reveals profound tensions arising within this system during the two poets' lifetimes. These tensions suggest that the falcon's, Anelida's, and Guillaume's anxieties over identity, and its capacity to signify through legible external signs, mirror a historical legal problem regarding identity in Machaut's and Chaucer's contemporary society.

The Origins of Armorial Bearings Disputes and Chaucer's Testimony

Coats of arms were originally used to help differentiate feudal lords and their vassals on the battlefield, and they became individualized and hereditary among male and female members of the upper nobility by the middle of the twelfth century. In the following century, armorial bearings were spreading to the lesser landed gentry and soldiers and, by the fourteenth century, to urban populations.[11] The idea behind the armorial bearing is deceptively simple in theory and often complex in execution. Designed as a marker of individual identity, each coat of arms must contain two key elements in order for it to function within the heraldic system: (1) it must be unique among all other coats of arms; and (2) its uniqueness must be visually recognizable. In other words, no two people, unrelated to one another, may bear the same coat of arms.

By Chaucer's and Machaut's time, France and England had developed armorial systems of great complexity, in which additions of special tags and borders to an individual family's coat of arms were capable of transmitting surprisingly detailed information to the viewer. Late medieval French and English armorial bearings were able to relate the exact position of their bearer within the family's genealogical tree: which son he was (first, second, third and so on); which son his father was; whether he (or she) was a member of the family by marriage, by inheritance, by alliance of family branches, or through the matrilineal line, and so on. Even illegitimate male offspring could, on a case by case basis, bear a family's coat of arms with special markings signifying bastardy.[12] Heraldry was a sophisticated semiotic system with the capacity to make detailed statements about a person's family line, his or her position within that family line, even his or her political allegiances. It was capable of visually representing, sometimes with astounding precision, a person's exact position within his or her society.[13]

Over the course of the fourteenth century, however, the swelling of the merchant class sharply increased the number of people able to buy their way into the ranks of the nobility. Meanwhile, owing to the rise in military activity during the Hundred Years War, even more people acquired noble status as a reward for distinction on the battlefield. As the number of individuals with newly gained noble identities continued to grow to include the lesser gentry and the urban bourgeoisie, the probability of assuming,

even if accidentally, a preexisting coat of arms saw a proportionate increase.[14] Starting in the end of the thirteenth century, a concerted effort to prevent this problem was made in various administrative courts across Europe: special court officers, known as heralds, were charged with logging and regularly updating extensive records of individual families' coats of arms in documents known as armorial rolls. The armorial roll kept by the heralds of the kingdom of Navarre, for example, dated between 1386 and 1475, numbers no less than 1,264 entries.[15] Nevertheless, two people could still end up with the same coat of arms, at which point the matter had to be taken to a court if neither party was willing to give up the armorial bearing.[16]

In France in the late fifteenth century, for example, Jean de Maupin adopted the hereditary arms of a certain Guillaume de Drucat, a late fourteenth-century nobleman, and was challenged in a court of law by Jacques de Rambures, who claimed that he, and not Maupin, was the rightful heir to the Drucat family line (Mathieu 137). Even proximate branches of the same family could dispute each other's rights in cases where the familial relationship itself might not be under question, but the branch's right to armigerous status was: in the fourteenth-century English case of *Grey v. Hastings*, for example, both parties were descended, Hastings patrilineally and Grey matrilineally, from a common ancestor, and each claimed sole hereditary right to the arms.[17]

Practically speaking, however, when two people wear identical coats of arms, how can one prove which one is the authentic sign and which, its perfect copy? These disputes raise the same problems that we have already seen play out in Machaut's and Chaucer's work: namely, the failure of the external sign to signify the "truth" about a person's identity. Surviving records reveal that armorial bearings lawsuits could drag on for years because, given the inadmissibility of the coat of arms itself due to its compromised status as legible sign, evidence for its authenticity had to come from other places.[18] Chaucer's own deposition in *Scrope v. Grosvenor* offers an intriguing glimpse into the processes of heraldic law, revealing the circumscribed authority of individual testimony within armorial bearings disputes.[19]

In its scrupulous language, Chaucer's testimony reflects the same anxieties over successfully reading the external sign observable in the *Squire's Tale*, *Anelida and Arcite*, and the *Voir Dit*. Chaucer begins by explaining

his reasons for believing Scrope to be the rightful bearer of the disputed arms: he tells the court that when he was with the English army approaching Retters, just before he was captured and taken to Machaut's native city of Reims in 1359, he recalls seeing Scrope bearing the arms in question, *azure a bend or* ("blue with a diagonal gold band").[20] Chaucer's first claim, therefore, is that Scrope visibly bore these arms in an English campaign of the Hundred Years War. Chaucer's initial means of asserting his belief in Scrope's right to his coat of arms is to emphasize that Scrope has displayed his arms publicly, before a large group of people, and within a significant historical moment. Chaucer is next asked to elaborate on his conviction that the *azure a bend or* belongs to Scrope. Chaucer responds that he has heard so from "veux chevaliers & esquiers" ("elderly knights and squires") and that Scrope's possession of these arms is generally known by "commune fame & publike vois" ("common fame and public voice").[21] In addition to the military world of the battlefield, Chaucer's deliberate answer identifies the external community, particularly its more aged members, their age conveying implicit authority, as being the ultimate guarantors of one's identity.

Chaucer goes on to explain that he has also seen Scrope's arms on numerous banners, windows, paintings, and clothing. Such material evidence of the arms in public use was a major factor in armorial bearings disputes, and each side in such cases usually produced lists upon lists of relevant objects and buildings.[22] Indeed, Scrope's victory in the trial was owed in part to his literally having more visual repositories that demonstrated his arms, or, in Robert Barrett's words, "[Grosvenor] could not muster the spatio-symbolic might to overcome Scrope's own widespread topography of honor" (Barrett 143). In the absence of authoritative record, Scrope's right to bear the *azure a bend or* had to be proven through both his military prowess and a social popularity so extensive as to have both geographic and temporal scope, stamped in human memory as well as on the physical world.

Deposition after deposition in these cases followed a similar framework to Chaucer's own: witnesses relied on military experience, communal hearsay, and visual evidence, often in that very order, to authorize their personal reading of the contested coat of arms. Such witnesses could be called by the hundreds: *Scrope v. Grosvenor* numbered over five hundred depositions and took six years in court. Scrope ultimately won

the lawsuit because he had substantially more witnesses, as well as the backing of John of Gaunt, whose own high social status helped bolster Scrope's claim.[23] In this way, armorial bearings disputes reveal the indelible importance of communal agreement in producing socially accepted meaning. The ultimate authority in these cases becomes the *audience* that can, speaking in unison, guarantee one's personal identity, and judgment is accorded based on that audience's numbers and/or social elevation. The resolution of *Scrope v. Grosvenor* thus depended on the sheer number of people that were able, by means of the same kinds of rhetorical strategies used by Chaucer in his testimony, to assert their reading of what an *azure a bend or* signifies, tilting the scales into Scrope's favor with the combined weight of their textual interpretation.

That the authorization of armorial identity is dependent on a process of public recognition was understood and further theorized in the legal writings produced during Machaut's and Chaucer's lifetimes. In his famous treatise *De insigniis et armis*, written in 1357, extant in over one hundred manuscript copies and first printed as early as 1472, the aforementioned Bartolo da Sassoferrato, himself a canon lawyer from Rome, explicitly addresses this close relationship between the bearing of identical arms and the opinion of the public:

> . . . *signum quod portat unus et signum quod portat alius non est unum et idem, immo sunt diversa, habentia omnimodam similitudinem*. Ad decisionem ergo predictorum premitto: primo, quod ille cuius signum alii portant prohibere, seu petere ut prohibeatur, si ille cuius est signum ex hoc iniuriatur, quia forte illud portant cum vituperio vel vituperose tractant . . .
>
> (. . . *the sign that someone bears is not really identical to the same sign borne by another; rather, they are different, although they might appear to be alike*. Therefore, concerning the initial question, I say first that one can prohibit, or seek to prohibit another from using his sign, if he is injured by it because the other party bears the coat of arms with contempt or treats it shamefully.) (Lines 65–70, emphasis added)[24]

Bartolo goes on to say that a third party may also lodge a complaint against two people who bear identical arms, if the existence of the two

identical arms harms him or her (lines 71–76). He further notes that a judge may prohibit the use of identical arms in case of "scandalum . . . et deceptionem subiectorum" ("scandal and confusion among the subjects"; lines 77–78).

Here Bartolo wrestles with a curious paradox that we have just seen play out in *Scrope v. Grosvenor*: two identical coats of arms may look like perfect copies of the same image to the public, but because they are borne by different people, they represent two distinct identities and are thus, despite being visually indistinguishable, two *different* signs. This difference is, however, essentially metaphysical: it is only visible to their bearers and completely lost on the public, who sees only one material sign and will therefore read it either one way or the other, depending on which of the two people it knows better. Thus, even though the two seemingly identical coats of arms are actually different, one must be eliminated because the public cannot perceive this difference.

If, however, the public does not regularly encounter the two identical signs, then having matching coats of arms *does not* demand prosecution. Bartolo cites, as an example, the case of a German who met a man in Rome with the same coat of arms as his own and wanted to take him to court. As long as the two parties reside in geographically separate regions, Bartolo explains, this case would be dismissed (lines 82–91). Identical armorial bearings are only a problem if the two people reside in the same place and, hence, offer competing readings to one and the same public. Bartolo's injunctions are taken up even more vigorously by Honoré Bonet in his aforementioned heraldic treatise, *L'Arbre des batailles* from circa 1387, which decries the man that assumes the arms of another as a "faulsaire" ("forger"; 237).[25] Bonet further argues that if one has adopted arms "publiquement" ("publicly"), then all other people, unrelated to him or her by blood, must be prevented from using the same sign (239).

Chaucer concludes his testimony with a personal anecdote that powerfully depicts the disconcerting effects of having two identical armorial bearings circulating before the same audience. He recounts a stroll through London that brings him to a tavern bearing, on its facade, the *azure a bend or*. Chaucer says that he asked who had painted "cestez armes du Scrope" ("these arms of Scrope") and that "un autre" ("someone") proceeded to inform him that these were the arms of Grosvenor, which had been the first time, Chaucer tells the court, he had ever heard

of anybody by that name. In addition to making an interesting statement about his own urbanite identity, Chaucer's inclusion of this detail stages an unsettling moment of defamiliarization that points to some of the deeper issues behind these disputes.[26] The known cypher, *azure a bend or*, left behind in foreign lands, has suddenly bloomed in an intimate corner of Chaucer's home territory. Despite the new context, Chaucer links the coat of arms before him to a memory of his wartime experience on the French battlefield, asking not why "cestez armes" ("these arms") are here, but why "cestez armes *du Scrope*" are here. But his reading is dismissed as incorrect and another, alien reading is offered in return. Chaucer's memory of the symbolic meaning of the *azure a bend or*, recalled from his military past, is judged mistaken by the authority of the figure of the *autre*, a figure whom Chaucer at no point names or describes in the deposition. (Innkeeper? Passerby? We never learn the answer.)

In this brief moment, the whole careful structure of Chaucer's testimony—the experience of the battlefield, the knowledge won from old-timers—is exposed for all of its fragile subjectivity because that *autre* has a completely alternate reading of the same sign.[27] Chaucer's encounter in the London street with this unidentified second witness thus echoes the uncanny dream vision scene between Guillaume and the mysterious wreathed figure of the Roi-qui-ne-ment game, a figure that, we recall, is likewise never named or identified. Like Chaucer, Guillaume attempts to read a heraldic symbol but is doubted in all aspects of his interpretation by an enigmatic personage whose unconvincing authority only exists within the artificial structure of the game-within-a-dream. Just as Machaut's dream "king" cannot offer a definitive judgment as to what Guillaume saw, so, too, Chaucer's *autre* could only supply one conflicting reading to Chaucer's own, leaving them both at an interpretive impasse that only hundreds more witnesses within that court of law were able to resolve.

By representing fidelity and infidelity by means of heraldic colors, Machaut and Chaucer disassemble, on a small scale, the same fantasy that lawsuits like *Scrope v. Grosvenor* expose: that an external sign can ever unambiguously represent a person's identity. To know whether or not one's lover is faithful is, as Chaucer's and Machaut's use of colors suggests, an issue of textual legibility: is one correctly reading the visible signs of the lover's behavior, or is one, like the falcon, or Anelida, or Guillaume,

performing a poor reading of the text? More important, how can one be sure of the text's correct interpretation? Chaucer's failed reading of the coat of arms painted in the London street reveals that the individual interpretation of the external sign is only valuable when amalgamated with other, similar readings that, together, form a communal acceptance of the sign; by itself, the individual reading has no power, as the *Voir Dit* itself illustrates.

Guillaume is never able to shake the effects of his dream about the portrait's color change; for the rest of the *Voir Dit*, he becomes increasingly paranoid that Toute Belle is being unfaithful to him, and his suspicions only grow stronger despite all of her assurances to the contrary. By the end of the work, their whole relationship has dissolved into a bitter exchange of "he said-she said" with no resolution because there is no outside community to support either party's claim as to whether Toute Belle is being faithful or unfaithful. In their coloring of fidelity, Chaucer and Machaut underscore the full significance of an individual's social reputation in the late medieval period: as armorial bearings disputes make manifest, an individual's identity was entirely *legally* dependent on his or her social reputation, which guaranteed the public's recognition of that identity.

The Armorial Bearing and Vernacular Authorial Identity

As Chaucer's testimony and Bartolo's and Bonet's treatises have shown, aristocratic identity in the late fourteenth century was, first and foremost, understood as the signified of an ideally stable external sign. If the audience was unable to agree on the meaning of that sign, then the link between signifier and signified was severed, and identity could no longer be confirmed. In what remains, I will demonstrate the close relationship for Machaut between this notion of identity formation as a process of textual reception, derived from contemporary heraldic law, and Machaut's own concerns over the vernacular poet's ability to control his own authorial identity, concerns further echoed by Chaucer.

Machaut directly links the threat of Toute Belle's potential infidelity to larger anxieties over authorship in the *Voir Dit*. Guillaume's distrust of Toute Belle does not stop at fears over her sexual unfaithfulness: by the end of the work, he is accusing her of a different charge that draws

on the structure of his earlier suspicions to claim that she is being not sexually, but *textually* unfaithful to him. This association between the two crimes—between sexual and textual betrayal—is readily signaled in a letter that Guillaume writes Toute Belle immediately after his dream vision. In this letter (L31), he recounts to her his dream about her portrait's color change and expresses fears over whether or not she is still true to him. This letter marks the first of the numerous instances in which Guillaume airs his suspicions over Toute Belle's potential infidelity to him, yet he suddenly concludes the letter on what initially seems like an unrelated topic. Guillaume abruptly tells Toute Belle that he is returning to her a little box containing some works that she has written; Toute Belle has, previously in the text, sent Guillaume some of her poetry for him to make personal copies of her work.

Toute Belle is likewise careful to restore literary texts to their rightful owner. In her response, and immediately after she addresses Guillaume's accusations over her *sexual* infidelity for the first time in the *Voir Dit*, Toute Belle also abruptly turns to the matter of the little box, writing (L32):

> Jay trouve en la laiette que vous mavies envoie unes lettres clauses qui aloient a vous · si les ouvri pour ce que ie ne savoie pour quoy vous les avies envoies · et trouvay que cestoit une balade que on vous envoioit · si la vous renvoie pour ce que ie pense que vous ne la veistes oncques · car elle est encores toute sellee ·
>
> (In the container you sent me I found a sealed letter intended for you, and I opened it because I knew not why you sent it along, and I found that it was a ballad someone had sent you. So I am sending this back because I believe you have never looked at it, for it is still sealed.)

Toute Belle has noticed an unfamiliar text mixed in with her lyrics that Guillaume has sent back to her; realizing that it is intended for Guillaume's eyes, she scrupulously returns it. Both Guillaume and Toute Belle are thus equally careful about restoring texts that do not belong to them. That this discussion over returning texts to their proper owners—both their proper authors and their proper readers—should occur within the

same exchange in which Guillaume *first* accuses Toute Belle of being unfaithful, hints at the possibility of a link between these two concerns.

That link is made wholly explicit by the end of the *Voir Dit*. Guillaume accuses Toute Belle yet again, but this time of a very different crime:

> . . . un riches homs qui est tresbien mes sires et mes amis ma dit et pour certein que vous moustrez a chascun tout ce que ie vous envoie · dont il samble a pluseurs que ce soit une moquerie · si en faites vostre volent · Mais iay bien aucune fois estet en tel lieu comment que ie vaille po que on ne faisoit mie einsi · et que cils qui miex savoit celer ou celle · cestoit li plus dignes de guerredon ·
>
> (. . . a powerful man who is very much my lord and friend has told me for certain that you show every man what I send you, and so this seems a joke to many. Do what you want in this regard, but though I am little worthy, I have been many times in places where this kind of thing wasn't done, where the man—or woman—who could best dissemble was the one most worthy of reward.) (L42)

In this passage Guillaume's allegation is not centered on Toute Belle's sexual infidelity for once, but, rather, on her lack of respect for his evident desire to keep his work out of the public eye. The detail that Guillaume has acquired the information about Toute Belle's reprehensible actions from "un riches homs" ("a powerful man"), who is Guillaume's lord and friend, implicitly authorizes this report as more than mere gossip, since the man is evidently of high social stature.

Guillaume's stress on the public nature of Toute Belle's shameful behavior, so flagrant as to be known to this respectable personage, is couched in the moralistic overtones of a sex scandal as he reminds Toute Belle that her behavior is aberrant in his opinion and ought to be concealed. Guillaume presses on:

> Je vous envoie ce que iay fait de puis de vostre livre · si le poez monstrer a qui quil vous plaist · car par ma foy · ie mettoie grant peinne au faire · Et comment que vous teingnies que se soit moquerie · par mame il na mie .iij. personnes au monde pour qui ie lentreprenisse a faire . . .

> (I am sending you what more I composed on your book, and you can show it to whomever you please, for by my faith, I took great pains in its making. And although you consider it a joke, by my soul there are hardly three persons in the world for whom I would have undertaken to do such composition. . . .) (L42 continued)

If the initial suspicion has been that Toute Belle is promiscuous with her body, then the new charge is that she is being promiscuous with *his* work, and these two types of infidelity fold directly into each other.[28] To be dressed in green, it turns out by the end of the *Voir Dit*, is to circulate another's literary property unlawfully to the public. In such a way, female infidelity has become entwined for Machaut with concerns over unlicensed manuscript circulation, and this link has been ushered into the text by the disreputable associations with the color green found in contemporary heraldic treatises.

Machaut's treatment of Guillaume's desire for control over his manuscripts resonates with what we have been able to glean of Machaut's own attitude toward copies of his work. The large number of luxurious manuscripts containing Machaut's entire collected literary output, produced both during his own lifetime and immediately after his death, has long suggested to scholars the possibility that Machaut was personally supervising the production and circulation of manuscript copies of his own texts. The firmest evidence to support this hypothesis is the presence in one of these manuscripts—Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ff. 1584, copied in the 1370s when Machaut was still alive—of an index headed by the line "Vesci l'ordenance que G. de Machaut wet qu'il ait en son livre" ("here is the order that G. de Machaut wants there to be in his book").[29]

Despite the negative connotations associated with the color green in late medieval culture, Machaut's conflation of Toute Belle's potential sexual infidelity with her textual infidelity continues to seem somewhat incongruous. A glance back at Bartolo's heraldic treatise, however, sheds light on this unexpected juxtaposition as having been historically conditioned for Machaut by the phenomenon of the armorial bearings dispute itself. Immediately after describing the need to prohibit identical armorial bearings, Bartolo turns to a discussion of other types of visual markers of identity, which, he points out, require similar kinds of legal protection:

> Ponamus exemplum in aliis signis quam in hiis que portantur pro armis. Pone quendam fabrum doctissimum, qui in gladiis et aliis suis operibus facit certa signa, ex quibus opus huius magistri esse dignoscitur, et ex hoc tales merces melius venduntur et avidius emuntur.
>
> (Let us provide an example of insignia other than those which are borne for coats of arms. Suppose that there is a very skilled craftsman—a smith—who places certain marks on his swords and other products he makes, by which one recognizes that those products are made by that master. And therefore such merchandise sells well and is in high demand.) (Lines 103–7)

Bartolo posits a direct relation between the issue of identical armorial bearings and other kinds of identity markers, namely the individual sign borne by the artisan who wishes to identify his craft by a publicly recognizable symbol, or the early instantiation of what we might now call a *trademark*.

Bartolo transfers his argument concerning identical coats of arms wholesale to this different type of external sign, writing:

> Posito quod alius faceret tale signum posset prohiberi, quia ex hoc populus decipitur: accipitur anim opus unius magistri pro opere alterius. . . .
>
> (In this case I think that if another smith uses the same mark, he can be prohibited [from doing so] because when the work of one is in fact taken as the work of another, it damages the people.) (Lines 107–9)

This formulation harks back to Bartolo's statement about prohibiting indistinguishable armorial bearings: like duplicate coats of arms, identical trademarks are damaging for the artist or craftsman wishing to lay claim to his or her work. They are equally damaging to the public that will not be able to interpret the trademark as a successful signifier and may therefore purchase the wrong product. Bonet follows Bartolo in making this same close association between heraldry and the trademark, whereby he also argues that using another craftsman's mark should be, just like taking

another's coat of arms, punishable by law (205). Within Machaut's (and Chaucer's) own lifetime, heraldic law was coming to be used to manage the legal protection of products of labor, in which the artist's or craftsman's external sign of his or her identity was understood to function exactly like a coat of arms within aristocratic culture.

It therefore comes as no surprise that both Guillaume and Toute Belle are mutually concerned with preserving each other's literary property by neither reading nor keeping each other's texts. It is further unsurprising that Guillaume's original suspicions over Toute Belle's infidelity, fueled by the changing *heraldic* colors of that perplexing portrait, fold seamlessly into suspicions over her showing his private work to others without his permission. The heraldic sign as visual marker of social identity and the artisan's sign as visual marker of the product of his or her labor were understood by fourteenth-century authors of heraldic treatises to be part of the same complicated system ever in danger of breaking down. The meaning of these signs, as we have seen from *Scrope v. Grosvenor*, was construed and authorized by the public, when it recognized a sign as indicating a particular individual or family—or artisan's workshop.

The need for obtaining public recognition for one's sign thus invests that public with tremendous power in making or breaking a person's claim to his or her identity, whether he or she is a member of the nobility or, Bartolo makes clear for us, an artist or craftsman. Grosvenor, we recall, also had scores of witnesses to bolster his claim to the *azure a bend or*, but he still lost the case because his audience was fewer in number and lower in social stature than that of Scrope. Guillaume's overwhelming anxiety, that Toute Belle has been publicly circulating his work without his permission, points to Machaut's understanding that late medieval chivalric—and artistic—identity is entirely dependent on public reception. If Guillaume cannot control the appearance and presentation of his text before the public, he can no longer control his own authorial identity, just like the nobleman when he cannot control the appearance and presentation of his sign, that is, his coat of arms. Machaut thus dresses his unfaithful lovers in green in order to gesture to the fantasy that identity can be unambiguously signified by a stable external sign, when, in reality, the artist, like the nobleman, is always at risk of owning a sign that will fail to represent him.

Chaucer does not link the blue-green color metaphor to ownership of

his own manuscripts in as direct a manner, but his reference to armorial culture in another key work, *The House of Fame*, suggests that he, too, is drawing on the relationship in contemporary law between the armorial bearings dispute and emergent notions of intellectual property rights. In *The House of Fame*, Chaucer's protagonist Geffrey—who is, like Guillaume, a figure for the poet Geoffrey Chaucer himself—comes to Fame's court. Here he encounters enthroned Fame, allegorized as a female sovereign, who is bestowing fame or infamy to the vernacular poets who come before her, as busts of famous poets from antiquity look down from literally foundational pillars that support the architectural space.[30] Fame's authorization of vernacular poets as canonical is absolute and yet pointedly arbitrary: some request fame and receive it, some request fame and get infamy, some request infamy and obtain fame, with Fame herself never explicating her decision process and the poets never afforded any opportunity to argue their cases (3.1534–48).

In addition to the busts from antiquity that ring the scene as monuments to literary history, Fame's arbitrary process of conferring artistic reputation is also literally framed by one other group. As Geffrey approaches the threshold to Fame's hall, he encounters a crowd of people, streaming from its interior, who are announcing Fame's presence. As he looks at them more closely, Geffrey realizes who these people are:

. . . pursevantes and heraudes,	. . . poursuivants and heralds,
That crien ryche folkes laudes,	Who proclaim the praise of rich folk,
Hyt weren alle; and every man	They were, all of them; and each
Of hem, as y yow tellen can,	Of them, as I can tell you,
Had on him throwen a vesture	Had thrown on him a garment
Which that men clepe a cote-armure,	Which people call a coat of arms,
Enbrowded wonderliche ryche,	Wonderfully richly embroidered,
Although they *nere nought yliche*.	Although they *were not at all alike*.
	(3.1320–28, emphasis added)

Geffrey goes on to marvel at the diversity of the coats of arms before him, each different from the last; one could, he reports, collect all the images of these armorial bearings into "a bible / twenty foot thykke" ("a tome twenty feet thick"; 3.1334–35). Stationed at the foot of Fame's hall, these heraldic officers—the same ones who, historically, were charged

with keeping records of existing armorial devices to ensure no duplication—are, in Chaucer's vision, Fame's personal custodians.[31] These men's own heraldic devices function, we note, perfectly: each herald bears his own set of arms, none of which are "yliche" ("alike") in an idealized vision of the kind of perfect semiotic clarity that Canacee envisages for the decoration of the falcon's enclosure and that Anelida imagines in her dream of a faithful Arcite. The vernacular poets awaiting Fame's judgment, meanwhile, are presented as the diametric opposite of these figures, for, once in the hall, Geffrey sees before him an undifferentiated throng of versificators, gathered in as many numbers, he says, as there are rooks' nests on trees (3.1515–16), each impossible to tell from the other.

While Machaut had used the female body to associate his coloring of fidelity, taken from heraldry, with the issue of controlling his authorial reputation, Chaucer articulates the same idea through a spatialized allegorical representation. He physically situates the anonymous crowd of poets, each awaiting audience with Fame, in a subordinate position before the officers that historically ensured the proper functioning of the armorial system and that are here also the officers of Fame's court. In contrast to the anonymous, uniform vernacular poets, moreover, these officers are themselves successful heraldic subjects, each vibrantly differentiated by his lavish and unique armorial bearing. By physically placing these two groups within a hierarchical relationship to one another, Chaucer is, like Machaut, using heraldry to illustrate the complete dependence of late medieval chivalric—and authorial—identity on the bearing of a publicly legible external sign. Just as Scrope's individual claim to his right to bear the *azure a bend or* means nothing unless it is upheld by "commune fame & publike vois," so too, the vernacular poet's individual claim to authorship and authority is meaningless without the fame that plucks him from the crowd.

As Geffrey watches Fame's merciless plucking of the poets who plead their cases before her, he has the following exchange with a person standing next to him:

"Frend, what is thy name? Artow come hider to han fame?"	"Friend, what is your name? Have you come here to receive fame?"
"Nay, for soothe, frend," quod y,	"No, in truth, friend," I said,

"I cam nought hider, graunt mercy,	"I do not come here, God have mercy,
For no such cause, by my hed!	For no such cause, by my head!
Sufficeth me, as I were ded,	It would be fine with me, even were I dead,
That no wight have my name in honde.	That no man have my name on hand.
I wot myself how best I stonde . . ." (3.1871–78)	I know myself how best I stand . . ."

In his answer, Geffrey vehemently refuses any part in the proceedings transpiring before him, rejecting both the allure of Fame's canonization and, more important, his interlocutor's request that he reveal his name. Placed in the context of this larger scene, with its watchful heralds, Geffrey's detachment emerges as a powerful act of authorial self-protection: he willingly cloaks himself in the anonymity that the other poets are desperately trying to cast off. By so doing, he denies his interlocutor any opportunity to perform that process of public identity recognition because, as his response itself explains and our whole discussion of contemporary heraldic law has illustrated, to release one's identity to the public is to live with the danger of its being misread and misinterpreted.

For Chaucer, just as for Machaut, privacy becomes the only means of protecting authorial identity in a social world that, increasingly over the course of the later fourteenth century, conceived of identity as dependent on a public's interpretation of a fundamentally fallible external sign. As their use of blue-green color imagery reveals, Chaucer and Machaut were responding to a contemporary issue concerning the public reception of identity that affected them both as members of a shared courtly society, with a shared language, a shared armigerous culture, and, as we have seen here, a shared set of concerns over the emergence and development of a vernacular poetics.

Notes

My deepest gratitude to David Wallace, Emily Steiner, and Kara Gaston for their thoughtful feedback on earlier drafts of this piece.

Unless otherwise noted, English translations are my own.

1. Ballade 248 in Machaut, *Poésies* 218. On this lyric as a source for *Against Women Unconstant*, see Wimsatt, "Guillaume de Machaut" 83–84; Wimsatt takes *Against Women* as definitively written by Chaucer.

2. Quotations from Chaucer taken from *The Riverside Chaucer*.

3. See, in particular, Wimsatt, *Chaucer and the French Love-Poets* and *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries* and Calin; see further Butterfield, *Familiar*.

4. Cf. in relation to the falcon's longing for a stable sign, Fyler's reading of the tale as an unsuccessful attempt to domesticate the outlandish and uncanny.

5. On the importance of the *Voir Dit* as a vehicle for Machaut's presentation of his authorial self, see, in particular, Brownlee; Cerquiglini-Toulet, *"Un engin si soutil"* and *Guillaume de Machaut*; and McGrady.

6. On this courtly pastime and its literary representations, see Green.

7. Quotations from Machaut, *Le Livre dou Voir Dit*.

8. Quotation from Machaut, *Le Jugement*. Intriguingly, in one of the manuscripts containing Machaut's collected works, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ff 9221, owned by Machaut's patron John, Duke of Berry, the title of the *Remede* is, uniquely, rendered as "Ecu Bleu" [The Blue Shield]: see further McGrady 85.

9. Bado Aureo, text edited in Jones 95–212; quotations all from p. 99.

10. Pastoureau observes that green and yellow were typically worn by fools and court jesters in the medieval European royal courts: see "Un couleur en mutation" and "Formes et couleur," 66–67. On green as an ignominious color in heraldry, cf. Brault 32.

11. For the classic studies, see Brault; Wagner; Denys; Keen, *Chivalry* and *Origins*; and Pastoureau, *Traité*.

12. Mathieu, esp. 98–116, and Keen, *Chivalry*, esp. 134–43. For heraldry's political and propagandistic uses, see Ailes 88–92; see also Coss.

13. For a thoughtful analysis of heraldry and blazonry (the verbal description of a coat of arms) as a complex semiotic system with its own "grammar," see Ragen.

14. My argument is informed by Patterson's excellent discussion on 179–86 of the ways in which the anxiety over bearing identical arms was also, at its core, a conservative reaction to the increasing social mobility of the fourteenth century that allowed more people to claim noble status.

15. See Wagner 25–82, and for the rolls esp., 46–55; also Paravicini for a bibliographic overview of scholarship on the rise of heralds across Western Europe, and, for the role of the herald in England, Armstrong.

16. See Mathieu 133–42; Wagner 12–24; Squibb, esp. 1–28; and Keen, "Jurisdiction."

17. On this and other English cases, see Keen, "English Military Experience," and Ayton.

18. Cf. Keen, *Origins*, esp. 44–56, and Rosenthal, esp. 63–94.

19. The full transcript of the court proceedings was edited by Nicholas, hereafter cited as *S&G* in the notes; Chaucer's testimony was separately edited in Crow and Olson 370–74. For an overview of the case, see Stewart-Brown.

20. Interestingly, Chaucer was captured and taken to Reims at the exact same time that Machaut was conscripted to defend the city's walls against advancing English offensives: Wimsatt, *Contemporaries* 78–84.

21. All citations from *S&G* 1.178–79. I have silently filled out abbreviations.

22. See, e.g., the lengthy list of buildings in one witness's testimony in *S&G* 1.222–26.

23. On Gaunt, see, in particular, Walker; Goodman; and Yeager. Interestingly, John of Gaunt's deposition in *Scrope v. Grosvenor* reveals that Scrope had previously been involved in a similar dispute over his arms with a certain Carminow, in which Gaunt was also a witness. It was concluded, as Gaunt relates in his deposition, that Carminow's family line had borne the arms since the age of King Arthur and that Scrope's family had borne the same since the age of William the Conqueror, and thus the judgment was that both parties could wear the arms. Clearly, in this case, about which we know only from Gaunt's testimony, the injunctions against bearing identical arms were, for whatever reason, circumvented, perhaps due to both parties' claims to lengthy lineages stemming from a mythical and valorized past? See *S&G* 2.165.

24. Text edited by Cavallar, 1–92; for a detailed overview of Bartolo's life and an extensive bibliography, see introduction in same.

25. Text edited in Bonet.

26. Rosenthal notes on 93 that Chaucer is the only one of the hundreds of witnesses to make reference to an urban, rather than military or ecclesiastical, context; see also Paul Strohm's brief discussion of this moment in 5–7, and Butterfield, "Chaucerian Vernaculars."

27. Cf., e.g., a surviving record of the judgment rendered in a different case, *Aton v. Boynton*, which says only that the judge in the dispute made his decision "par bonne deliberation" ("through good deliberation") and omits any more concrete reasons for the basis on which the judgment was awarded: see Ellis.

28. Cf. McGrady's argument that Toute Belle cheats on Guillaume not as a woman, but as a reader, and that Guillaume's anxieties over her behavior are an attempt to control his reading public: 58–61, 73–74.

29. On the question of Machaut's supervision of his manuscripts, see, in particular, Williams, "An Author's Role," and "Machaut's Self-Awareness"; Bent; Kibler and Wimsatt; Earp; and McGrady.

30. For a thorough account of the role of fame in the antique literary tradition, the scholastics and Chaucer's own Italian contemporaries and those sources' relation to Chaucer's text, see Boitani.

31. Delany makes the interesting suggestion on 91–92 that Chaucer's insistence on the costliness of the heralds' attire, in their role as Fame's officers, suggests that fame is something that can be bought, further emphasizing fame's contingency.

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6

The Judge as Reader, the Reader as Judge

Literary and Legal Judgment in Dante, Machaut, and Gower

ROSEMARIE MCGERR

Machaut's *Jugement dou roy de Navarre* has long intrigued readers with its unusual structure and combination of genres. In addition to its self-presentation as a revision of Machaut's earlier *Jugement dou roy de Behaigne*, the *Navarre* expands the love debate genre of the first poem to integrate both a prologue about contemporary historical concerns and discussions of the ideals of royal judgment that have led critics to associate the poem with medieval works of advice to princes and even suggest that the *Navarre* presents some of Machaut's most significant commentary on kingship (Ehrhart 9; de Looze 15). The responsibility of kings to be good judges did play an important role in medieval *Fürstenspiegel*. From their early days in the seventh century to their proliferation in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, mirrors for princes held up the ideal of the ruler as impartial judge (Rigby 15–16).

Nevertheless, Machaut's interweaving of advice on royal judgment with a debate about who suffers most in love and commentary on events surrounding the plague of 1348 may seem awkward to modern readers, until we understand the developments that took place in *Fürstenspiegel* during the fourteenth century. As Judith Ferster explains, these developments came about in response to the paradox in works of advice to princes: the "government of princes" (*regimen principum*) means helping the prince govern by governing the prince, which is an inherently

dangerous role for an author to take (2–3). Medieval works of advice for rulers sometimes negotiated this paradox by presenting only general principles or by deflecting criticism of a ruler's actions onto advisors or onto examples from other times or places.

In the later Middle Ages, however, "camouflaged" or "disguised" mirrors for princes developed as a new solution to the paradox of educating the prince: these texts presented advice and political commentary in "encoded" form that rulers and other readers needed to interpret (Ferster 7). While Ferster focuses on the influence of the *Secretum secretorum*, the twelfth-century Latin translation of an Arabic account of Aristotle's advice to Alexander the Great, my essay explores this "hermeneutics of reading camouflaged texts" (4) from another angle, as a way of illuminating the *Navarre* and two other works that have important parallels with it, Dante's *Commedia* and John Gower's *Confessio amantis*. All three works inscribe a mirror for princes within a poem about love; all three have close associations with specific princes; and all three suggest that skilled reading is central to wise judgment. Read in this context, Machaut's poetic achievement in the *Navarre* becomes more clear.

The prince's role as judge is a central issue in most medieval works of advice on good governance, which encourage rulers to use good laws to uphold justice and peace among their subjects. In the twelfth century, for example, John of Salisbury argued in his *Policraticus* that a true prince upholds the law, while a tyrant undermines the law in order to bring the people into servitude (Nederman, *Lineages* 71). Thanks in part to the influence of the *Policraticus*, the increasing numbers of mirrors for princes in the thirteenth century also associated good rulership with upholding the law: "[K]ings were to be guardians of justice, ruling in the interests of the common good and protecting their people" (Skoda 284). During the fourteenth century, however, the forms taken by *Fürstenspiegel* evolved, borrowing from different literary genres in the vernacular languages of Europe, as well as Latin. This interweaving of genres helped disguise the critique of contemporary rulers, which became more dangerous when expressed in vernacular languages. At the same time, this hybridization of literary form allowed for new ways of exploring the motivations and measures of royal judgment, including its relationship to divine models of judgment and theories of ethical behavior.

Some of the most accomplished poets of the fourteenth century composed poems that address contemporary rulers in their role as judge but complicate the depiction of legal judgment by inscribing the poet into the process of judgment. In the case of the *Commedia*, the *Jugement dou roy de Navarre*, and the *Confessio amantis*, the author's persona is literally judged within the poem but figuratively authorizes a process of judgment for readers that links literary judgment to legal judgment. In particular, by exploring the relationship between reading and judging, these authors constructed poems that highlight the role of reading as a means of developing good judgment, whether by princes or by other readers whose self-government contributes to creating a just society.

The link between reading and judgment in all three poems began deep in the history of European languages, in which words for reading, interpreting, advising, and judging are interrelated. In Latin, *legere* ("to select, choose, gather, read") and *lex* ("law") derive from the same Proto-Indo-European root, as does German *lesen* ("to bring together, collect, read"; Lewis and Short s.vv. "*lego*" and "*lex*"). As D. H. Green shows, the meanings of medieval Latin *legere* share the same range as *lesen* and two other medieval German words for reading, interpreting, and counseling, *reden* and *ratan* (28–55, 76, 118). In Old and Middle English, *raedan* and *reden* combined the meanings of read, interpret, deliberate, and judge, while terms based on *legere* and *lex* (such as *legistre* ["lawyer, legal scholar"] and *legible* ["readable"]) entered Middle English through Latin and French (Kurath s.vv. "*reden,*" "*legistre,*" and "*legible*"). In Italian, *leggere* ("to read") and *legge* ("law") maintain the connection (Marchi 464), while in French *lire* ("to read, interpret") and *élire* ("to choose, elect") offer a similar association (Mazure 84 and 210). More specifically, the link between reading and legal judgment was established for readers of Latin by Isidore of Seville in the early seventh century. In Book 2, section 10, of his study of the origins of words, *Etymologiae,* Isidore explains, "Nam lex a legendo vocata" (Isidore of Seville, ed. Lindsay).[1] Isidore then repeats this same explanation in Book 5, section 3.

The *Etymologiae* circulated widely throughout the medieval period as a textbook on Latin language and literature, as well as encyclopedia (Irvine 209–10); but it was John of Salisbury who picked up Isidore's association of reading and law and made it essential to the definition of the good

ruler in the *Policraticus*. In Book 4, chapter 6, John applies the command in Deuteronomy for the kings of Israel to read God's law every day to the prince of his own time as well, who needs to read the law in order to rule properly:

> Legem siquidem habere in mantica parum prodest, nisi fideliter custodiatur in anima. Legenda est ergo omnibus diebus uitae suae. Ex quibus liquido constat quam necessaria sit principibus peritia litterarum, qui legem Domini cotidie reuoluere lectione iubentur. Et forte quod sacerdotes legem cotidie legere iubeantur non frequenter inuenies. Princeps uero cotidie legit, et leget cunctis diebus uitae; quia qua die non legerit legem, ei non dies uitae sed mortis est. (John of Salisbury, ed. Keats-Rohan 250–51)[2]

John then cites the King of the Romans' advice to the King of the Franks to educate his children because "rex illiteratus est quasi asinus coronatus" (John of Salisbury, ed. Keats-Rohan 251) ("an illiterate king was like a crowned ass"; John of Salisbury, trans. Nederman 44). For John, reading is essential for good judgment in the prince's personal as well as public government: the prologue to the *Policraticus* states, "Nam a uitiis redimitur animus, et suaui et mira quadam etiam in aduersis iocunditate reficitur, cum ad legendum uel scribendum utilia mentis intendit acumen" (John of Salisbury, ed. Keats-Rohan 22) ("When a sharp mind is expanded by useful reading and writing, the soul is set free from vice, and redeemed from a state of adversity by a sweet and marvellous pleasure"; John of Salisbury, trans. Nederman 4). This view of the power of reading to shape a prince's ability to judge is indeed crucial to mirrors for princes as a literary genre, for they exist to provide counsel in the absence of counselors, thereby encouraging the prince to use his reading skills to develop the self-government that leads to justice for the community as a whole.[3]

The wide influence of the *Etymologiae* and *Policraticus* helps explain why later authors of Latin and vernacular discussions of kingship echo and elaborate on these ideas about reading, law, and judgment. In the *Commedia*, the *Jugement dou roy de Navarre*, and the *Confessio amantis*, Dante, Machaut, and Gower, each of whom wrote in Latin as well as the vernacular, translate these ideas into different languages and literary

genres and expand on the link between reading and just rulership established by these earlier authors.

In the *Commedia*, Dante suggests dialogue between his poem and the works of Isidore of Seville and John of Salisbury in several ways. Dante places Isidore, along with King Solomon and Thomas Aquinas, among the souls of great wisdom in the sphere of the Sun in *Paradiso* 10, and critics have shown that the *Etymologiae* often serves as a source for Dante's information about geography and etymology (for example, Tambling 38 and 45). Although John of Salisbury does not appear in the *Commedia* by name, Dante often makes use of the *Policraticus* as a source in this poem.[4] It is in the sphere of Jupiter (*Paradiso* 18–20), however, that Dante's poem turns most extensively to the topic of just rulership and the link between reading and legal judgment established by both earlier authors, and this part of the poem provides evidence for reading the *Commedia* as a *Fürstenspiegel.*

The focus of the poem until *Paradiso* 18 has been on educating the pilgrim-poet, identified as Dante (*Purgatorio* 30.55), in the truth about heavenly justice and love, in order to help him develop spiritual vision, especially in his love for Beatrice and his goals as a poet, and prepare for the exile from Florence he will soon suffer. The poem's interweaving of different generic conventions, intertextual allusions, and guides for the pilgrim-poet reveals its hybrid and innovative nature. Although the poem at times encourages readers to view the pilgrim-poet's journey as having educational benefits for them, the poem also depicts his journey as a matter of special grace that both cleanses him from his own errors and prepares him for the role of poet-prophet to reveal the errors of others.

Immediately after the pilgrim-poet has received his most explicit instruction in this role from his ancestor Cacciaguida in the sphere of courage (*Paradiso* 15–17), however, the poem sets the pilgrim-poet's education into a new context that reflects the link between reading and legal judgment found in the work of Isidore of Seville and John of Salisbury. Whereas the primary mode of the pilgrim-poet's education thus far has been listening to the words of those he encounters on his journey, in *Paradiso* 18, in the sphere of justice, the pilgrim-poet needs to read the words of his first lesson, and the words he reads are specifically addressed to a wider audience.

As soon as the pilgrim-poet reaches the sphere of Jupiter, he sees the souls of the just rulers, who appear in the form of lights that first fly and sing like birds, but then fall silent as they form letters that spell out "Diligite iustitiam qui iudicatis terram" ("Love justice, you who judge the earth"), the opening words of the Book of Wisdom (*Paradiso* 18.88–93). Though Beatrice serves as his guide at this point in his journey, the pilgrim must read the letters himself to understand the lesson offered by the just rulers. The passage actually provides an account of the pilgrim-poet's reading process, deciphering each shape he sees in sequence as thirty-five letters—"cinque volte sette / vocali e consonanti" ("five times seven vowels and consonants"; *Paradiso* 18.88–89)—that he interprets as five words.[5] As John Ahern notes, the invocation of the muse that interrupts the description of the pilgrim-poet's reading process refers to the poem as "questi versi brevi" ("these brief lines"; *Paradiso* 18.87), so that the narrator also "carefully draws the reader's attention to the poem's text as a series of consecutive graphic signs on the page" ("Dante's Last Word" 7).

The description of the pilgrim-poet's reading experience here differs from his reading of the inscription on the gate of Hell (*Inferno* 3.1–9), which the pilgrim-poet reads but has interpreted for him by Virgil as addressed to all of the damned souls in the afterlife, rather than the living. The exhortation spelled out by the just rulers addresses those on earth who act as judges, which would include the pilgrim-poet, since Dante served in the Florentine commune government during the period the poem depicts its action taking place (Lansing 897–98). Rachel Jacoff argues that the quotation from the Book of Wisdom links this part of the *Commedia* to three treatises of advice on rulership with Tuscan connections, as well as frescos Dante probably saw in the council rooms at Siena and San Gimignano, in which the Christ child holds a scroll with the same words (Jacoff S86). Nevertheless, the poem's discussion of justice here moves beyond the pilgrim-poet and the critique of Florence offered by Cacciaguida in the previous cantos to a world stage, beginning with the transformation of the final *m* of *terram* into the image of an imperial eagle that goes on to offer oral instruction. As we look more closely, we can see that the "reading lesson" in *Paradiso* 18 forms the introduction to an embedded mirror for princes that continues to highlight the link between reading and judgment in exploring the meaning of just rulership.

Earlier in the *Commedia*, Dante underscores the link between reading and law by rhyming *legge* ("reads") with *legge* ("law") at *Inferno* 5.56–58; *Inferno* 19.83–85; and *Purgatorio* 26.83–85. With the quotation from Wisdom spelled out in *Paradiso* 18, the poem links reading, love, justice, and judgment, since the Latin verb *diligere* ("to esteem, love, regard highly") comes from the same root as *legere* ("to select, choose, gather, read"; Lewis and Short s.vv. "*diligo*" and "*lego*"). Within the instruction about just rulership in *Paradiso* 18–20, as Teodolinda Barolini argues (128), the poem offers its most self-conscious references to reading, writing, and interpretation of signs: the poem's most dense uses of *segno, segnare*, and *scrivere* appear in these cantos; the passage also offers the poem's only linking of the verbs *leggere* and *scrivere* (19.71–72); and the passage contains one of the two acrostics in the *Commedia* (19.115–41).

The acrostic in *Paradiso* 19 is a powerful example of Dante's use of the sphere of justice to illustrate the link between skills in close reading and just rulership, this time on the part of the poem's readers. The acrostic presents a list of rulers who failed to uphold justice, while *Paradiso* 20.31–72 balances these with a list of the most honored of the just rulers who formed the letters read by the pilgrim-poet in *Paradiso* 18. Dante's poem thus follows a tradition in *Fürstenspiegel* of offering examples of just rulers as models and unjust rulers as warnings, but does so in a way that continuously highlights the role of reading.

After the reading lesson using letters composed of the souls of just rulers, the poem goes on to discuss the deeds of the unjust rulers in terms of writing them down, which not only reminds readers of the reading process but also actually guides them to read the passage more closely. First, the eagle explains that one of Albert I of Austria's unjust deeds will soon make a pen move (19.115–17). Next, the eagle declares that the evil acts of Frederick II of Aragon will require abbreviated letters if a full account is to fit on a single page (19.130–35). As a result, the poem "encourages the reader to interrupt the deciphering of consecutive signs, stand back, and take in the sign-covered page as a visual unit with a significance all its own" (Ahern, "Dante's Last Word" 8). Then, when the eagle says that the good deeds of Charles of Anjou will be marked with an *I* and the bad ones with an *M* (the Roman numerals for 1 and 1000) (19.127–29), the poem encourages readers to pay attention to the way that lines of text on a page

might begin, which calls attention to the acrostic Dante has inscribed into this very passage:

> For, taking in the page vertically rather than horizontally, the attentive reader notices the sequence of capital letters, *LLLVVVEEE*, from which he derives the word *lue*, "pestilence," which succinctly states God's judgment on the unjust rulers. Once again, by interrupting the usual process of reading, and by reading isolated letters out of sequence, the reader arrives at a deeper meaning. (Ahern, "Dante's Last Word" 9)

While Tambling (52–56) also comments on the importance of this passage's link of reading and justice, neither scholar notes that the poem presents the lines that make up the acrostic in terms of what Persians will see or read in the book that records the deeds of the unjust rulers: "Che poran dir li Perse a' vostri regi, / come vedranno quel volume aperto / nel qual si scrivon tutti suoi dispregi?" ("What may the Persians say to your kings, when they shall see that volume open in which are recorded all their dispraises?"; *Paradiso* 19.112–14). The reference to readers who might be considered "other" to the readers of Dante's poem provides a link to Canto 20, which Tambling argues presents a major challenge to readers' expectations about divine judgment by including the Trojan Ripheus among the just rulers who make up the eyebrow of the eagle (39).

William Franke argues that the inclusion of Ripheus among the just rulers most honored in Paradise, apparently based on Virgil's depiction of him in the *Aeneid*, highlights the function of reading as interpretation (24–25). Just as the passage encourages Christian readers to wonder what Persian readers might think about the actions of rulers the eagle deems unjust, the inclusion of Ripheus highlights potential differences in judgment about what constitutes just rulership, both among human beings and between human beings and the Divine Judge. While Lauren Seem sees the poem's treatment of justice in these cantos as an exploration of "ambiguities in the process of human judgment" (86), the passage also suggests that learning to read closely will lead to better skills in judgment: as Christine Baur argues about the poem as a whole, "the only solution to the interpretive problem . . . is to learn to read well" (91).

Reading Cantos 18–20 as a mirror for princes may help support the argument that the "Epistle to Cangrande della Scala" reflects Dante's goals

for the *Commedia*, whether or not the Latin letter is his composition. The letter dedicates the *Paradiso* to the Duke of Verona and offers detailed guidance on reading the whole poem as a depiction of earthly and divine justice, following traditional methods for reading Holy Scripture for multiple levels of meaning (Caesar 89–103). Boccaccio offers conflicting accounts about patrons for the *Commedia* (Ahern, "What Did the First Copies of the *Comedy* Look Like?" 3–4): Dante may have planned to dedicate each of the *cantiche* to a different noble patron (*Inferno* to Uguccione della Faggiuola of Pisa, *Purgatorio* to Marchese Moruello Malaspina, and *Paradiso* to King Frederick III of Sicily), but Boccaccio also says that Dante sent small groups of cantos to Cangrande della Scala throughout the composition of the poem and may have wished to dedicate the whole poem to him. The condemnation of Frederick III at *Purgatorio* 7.112–27 suggests that Dante changed his mind about him as patron of the *Paradiso*, and the allusions to Cangrande as prophesied leader at several points in the poem suggest that Dante came to view the young duke, whose family sheltered Dante during his exile, as both patron and potential beneficiary of the counsel on just rulership offered by the poem.

Like Tambling (34–35), Kenelm Foster sees close ties between the discussion of justice and rulership in *Paradiso* 18–20 and Dante's *De Monarchia* (72–76). Richard Kay argues that Dante wrote the *Monarchia* after he had begun the *Paradiso*, to help Cangrande della Scalla defend his appointment as Imperial Vicar against Pope John XXII's nullification of the appointment in March 1317 (Dante, ed. Kay xxvi–xxix); but Anthony Cassell shows how the *Monarchia* makes use of several *Fürstenspiegel* of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, including John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* and Thomas Aquinas's *De regimine principum* (62, 256). Since the *Monarchia* is a work of political philosophy and advice to princes, its links with *Paradiso* 18–20 suggest that this passage helps transform the *Commedia* into the guide to reading earthly and divine judgment that the "Epistle to Cangrande" describes. At the same time that it displays links with more traditional works of advice for princes, however, the *Commedia* interweaves its lessons about good rulership with examples of good and evil forms of love, as well as literary commentary, social satire, and spiritual enlightenment; and the poem keeps its focus on the poet's persona as the one instructed and reformed within the narrative—and thereby authorized to create a reading lesson for others. In doing so, Dante's poem

illustrates the deflection, disguising, and focus on hermeneutics that characterize the new forms of *Fürstenspiegel* in the fourteenth century.

When we look closely at Machaut's *Navarre*, we can see that this poem achieves a similar transformation with the genre of courtly love debate. Though Machaut presents this poem as a response to his earlier judgment poem, scholars have noted significant differences between the two poems beyond the reversal of judgment on which lover has suffered more. It is the narrator himself, identified as poet Guillaume de Machaut, rather than the King of Bohemia, who is held responsible for the judgment presented in the earlier poem (for example, lines 573, 867, 884, 1028, and 1499), and Guillaume is put on trial for his (mis)judgment when he refuses to reverse his decision. In addition to this new focus on the role of the poet, the *Navarre* offers an innovative, perhaps unsettling, combination of elements from historical chronicle, legal record, advice to princes, courtly romance, and allegorical debate; but one of the most important differences between the two poems is the *Navarre*'s exploration of the relationship between reading and judgment.

Many scholars have noted the poem's engagement with ideals of kingship. Margaret Ehrhart comments, "In the *Jugement dou roy de Navarre*, we see a clear appropriation of themes from the *speculum principum* tradition. The poem's celebrated *Prologue*, a harrowing description of the calamities that marked the year 1349, delineates a cause and effect relationship between the vices of the powerful and disasters of every sort, while the fictionalized portrait of the king of Navarre, surrounded by a court of personified abstractions, offers a model of the ideal ruler" (9). Little is known about the relationship of Machaut and Charles of Navarre at the time of the poem's composition. Though the *Prologue* gives the date of the narrative's action as November 9, 1349, scholars have suggested various dates of composition between November 1349 and 1354 (Earp 209–10). Charles became king in October 1349, at age seventeen (33); but the poem does not depict the November date as significant for the king or the poet, except perhaps to suggest that Machaut's composition of the poem fulfills a royal command. The *Navarre* does provide a portrait of rulership that both flatters and guides the young king, but deftly presents the king's role as guiding the poet, instead of the other way around.

In November 1349, Machaut may have had need of a new patron. John of Luxemburg, King of Bohemia, whom Machaut served as secretary,

chaplain, composer, and poet for many years and who secured Machaut's appointment as canon at the cathedral of Reims (Machaut, ed. Palmer xiii), died in 1346 at the Battle of Crécy, and his daughter Bonne became Machaut's patroness until her death in September 1349 (xiv; Earp 24). Some critics argue that Machaut began the poem that became the *Navarre* at Bonne's behest, with the character Bonneürté, who accuses the poet of injustice in his earlier poem, remaining as a tribute to her in the revised version (Earp 25, 33). Machaut went on to write the *Confort d'ami* for Charles of Navarre in 1356, when he was imprisoned for conspiring with the English for control of France, despite his marriage to the daughter of King John II (Machaut, ed. Palmer xv); but there is no record of Machaut writing for Charles after this point.

As an experienced poet writing for a young king, Machaut may have seen his role as different from the ones he played when he wrote his earlier poems; and the poem's account of the troubling events leading up to November 1349 in the *Prologue* sets up a context of concerns about leadership beyond events in Machaut's personal life or the king's. Along with Anne Robertson (413, 450) and Daisy Delogu (*Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign* 10, 32), Ehrhart suggests that Machaut's ideas about kingship were shaped by his reading of John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (Ehrhart 6–7). In addition, Ehrhart argues that Machaut's poem reflects ideas in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*:

> The ruler's chief tasks were fostering and dispensing justice, promoting peace and concord, and imposing *aequitas*, that is, creating an ordered society. He should thus first of all govern himself, subduing his own passions, as made clear by Isidore of Seville's influential etymology of the Latin word for "kings": "reges' a recte agendo" ["kings from acting correctly."] (7)

Given the influence of these authors on Machaut, it should not surprise us to find that Machaut's poem also reflects the links between reading and legal judgment asserted by both Isidore of Seville and John of Salisbury.

Although not making that connection, Delogu has recently argued that "Machaut's advice to rulers must be considered within a broader framework of what we could call ethical reading," which she describes as "an active process that supposes a connection between a reader's engagement with a text, and his or her subsequent conduct" ("'Laissier le mal'" 264).

As evidence, Delogu discusses the opening of Machaut's *Fonteinne amoureuse* (13–22), which describes reading as judging between good and evil and associates reading with choosing by repeatedly rhyming forms of *lire* ("read") with forms of *eslire* ("choose, elect") (268). In my view, Machaut begins this association of reading and judgment in the *Navarre,* both in his playfulness with words deriving from Latin *legere* and in his depiction of reading and law in the poem.

In the poem's *Prologue,* the narrator depicts himself as a struggling reader, attempting "en histoire / Lisant" ("in reading history"; 146–47) to understand the significance of the "orribles merveilles" ("horrible, uncanny things"; 143) that have recently occurred, unlike any before them.[6] Rather than finding this understanding in his own reading, however, the narrator indicates that it was God who revealed the meaning of these "mervilleus signes" ("marvelous tokens") to everyone:

> Mais li sires qui tout a fait
> Par experience de fait,
> Com sires souvereins et dignes
> Seur tous, de ces mervilleus signes
> Nous moustra la signefiance,
> Et nous en mist hors de doubtance
> Si a point et si proprement
> Que chascuns le vit clerement. (181–88)
>
> (But the Lord who made everything / Through his direct intervention, / Like a sovereign gracious lord / Over all things, showed us the meaning / Of these marvelous tokens, / And brought us beyond the point of doubt / So directly and so properly / That everyone saw it clearly.)

This passage suggests events in history are ambiguous signs that need interpretation, but that reading historical accounts may not provide the full understanding that one seeks, which may be beyond human capacity. At the same time, the passage suggests that earthly lords have a role similar to that of the Heavenly Lord in judging the truth about troubling events for their people. The poem continues to suggest that reading can reveal the truth when Bonneürté tells the poet's persona that he will find his false

judgment if he reads his previous books (869); but he stresses the difficulty of reading closely and complains that, since he has written so many books, it would take too long to read through them all (884–95). Furthermore, he might not find what she judges to need correction, if he does not understand her thoughts (896–907). When Bonneürté then tries to explain Guillaume's error in judgment in his earlier poem, he refuses to revise his judgment and insists on defending it before a "juge puissant, / . . . Qui soit sages homs et discrez" ("a powerful judge, / . . . A person who would be wise and discreet"; 1071–73).

The judge they agree on is the King of Navarre, and the poem links his wisdom and discretion to "reading" skills superior to those of the poet-narrator. When Bonneürté and Guillaume appear before the king to present their arguments, her language suggests a parallel between the narrator's earlier comments about God's interpretation of historical events he tried to "read" and the king's role as judge in the matter she brings before him: "La me vorrai je pourvëoir / De vous compter une merveille, / D'autres merveilles nom pareille" ("There I'd like to see about / Recounting to you an extraordinary thing, / Something quite unlike other wonders"; 1476–78). The poem thus suggests a parallel between reading and legal judgment as skills befitting a king, and the King of Navarre's successful reading and judging provide a guide for the poet-narrator's reform. In addition to presenting Guillaume as a struggling reader, the poem presents him as someone who should know how to take the role of lawyer ("vous devenez advocas"; 732), but is ultimately unable to make his case. In effect, the "evidence" that Guillaume and Bonneürté offer to the judge becomes a rereading/rewriting of Machaut's earlier poem, which the narrator states in the conclusion he has done "Pour miex congnoistre mon meffait" ("the better to understand my fault"; 4201), after the king offers his "jugement" ("sentence"; 4180) of Guillaume's guilt.

Although much of the *Navarre* echoes Machaut's earlier exploration of suffering in love, this poem presents the debate more clearly in terms of law and legal procedure. As R. Barton Palmer explains, "Instead of a response to a conventional *demande d'amors* (question of love), the debate here is more like a law suit in which the plaintiff makes a complaint whose rightness or wrongness is to be determined by an impartial judge" (Machaut, ed. Palmer xxxiii). References to law abound in the poem, including

Moderation's claim that Bonneürté has supported her complaint with arguments "ramenées a droiture" ("[drawn from] the law"; 3658) and Reason's statement that the judge "tout le droit en sa main tient" ("holds all the legal power in his hands"; 4026). The judge himself indicates that his goal is to achieve true justice ("bons drois"), and he will do this through good counsel, as mirrors for princes traditionally advise: "Bons drois a bon mestier d'aïe / Par quoy grace ait adès son cours / Pour aidier droit en toutes cours" ("Real justice needs the good offices of assistance, / So that grace may always have full rein / And thus uphold the right in every court of law"; 1576–78).

Bonneürté's description of the qualities that make the king a good judge certainly echoes the ideals described in medieval *Fürstenspiegel*; but her comment that these virtues make the king the one she can elect ("eslire") as a true judge suggests she understands the link between reading and good judgment found in the *Policraticus*:

> C'est uns princes qui aimme honnour
> Et qui het toute deshonnour,
> Sages, loiaus, et veritables,
> Et en tous ses fais raisonnables.
> Il scet tant et vaut, qu'a droit dire,
> Nul milleur ne porroie eslire. (1097–1102)

> (He's a prince who loves honor / And hates dishonor of any kind, / A man wise, loyal, and truthful, / And reasonable in all his doings. / He knows so much and is so worthy that, / To speak the truth, I could choose none better.)

The King of Navarre also underscores the link between good judgment and reading skills later in the poem, when he tells Bonneürté that he will elect ("esliray") good counselors to advise him:

> Et pour tant vous dis je desor,
> Chiere dame, que j'esliray
> Tel conseil, comme je vorray,
> De vostre belle compaingnie
> Qui a vous est acompaingnie,
> Car a .i. bon juge apartient

> Qui jugemens en sa part tient
> Qu'il ait conseil en tous endrois. (1564–71)
>
> (Moreover, dear lady, I'll make it clear to you / At this point that I'll pick / Whatever advisors I desire / From your splendid entourage, / Which has accompanied you. / Truly it's fitting for a competent judge / Weighing a decision / To take counsel from all sides.)

The poem suggests that this king does read and judge wisely, for Moderation tells him, "vous congnoisterez le point / De quoy justice est a point pointe / Quant juges sus bon droit s'apointe" ("you recognize the point / On which justice is rightly fixed / When a judge establishes himself on true justice"; 3640–42); but the sentence itself, with its wordplay on "point," "a point," "pointe," and "s'apointe," tests the reader's ability to judge the meaning of ambiguous signs.

Machaut's exploration of the relationship between reading and judging helps link the different parts of the poem together; but the impression that the poem ultimately creates is, as in the *Commedia*, that the reading skills needed for sound judgment are complex and not easy to learn. Though the narrator claims that his Heavenly Lord revealed the significance of the terrible events he tried to understand, he ends up describing the deaths that resulted from the plague as beyond human ability to understand or record correctly (393–402). A similar disjunction occurs when the narrator explains that he judges hunting hares to be an honorable activity because members of the nobility undertake it and it brings about self-improvement (507–14), yet he rejects the nobler and more improving form of "hunting" that Bonneürté urges him to undertake: reading his books to find his error in judgment, so that he can avoid dishonor. The poem therefore raises questions about human capacity for reading and judging before the poet's trial begins.

Laurence de Looze argues that the *Navarre* reflects a change in the way people thought about the concept of judgment in the mid-fourteenth century: "When one *Jugement* text supposedly refutes another, we have entered a world of unstable and relative meanings: today's truth can be tomorrow's error" (15). De Looze explains that the French word *jugement* evolved in meaning during the period between Machaut's two judgment poems: "in the 1330s the word is still legislative: a decision, a judgment

regarding a matter," whereas "the word is first attested in 1361 . . . with the meaning of a *faculty for judgment* (that is, a person's good or bad judgment)" (16).

While the *Navarre* focuses on the poet-narrator as the one whose reading and judgment skills need improvement, the poem presents a "camouflaged" form of *Fürstenspiegel* by framing the courtly debate about suffering in love with questions about how human beings develop skills in interpreting evidence and seeking true justice. Bonneürté's exhortation that the poet-narrator leave the hunting he judges to be ennobling and take up reading to correct his error in judgment echoes John of Salisbury's argument about the importance of reading for self-government; and the poem's portrait of the King of Navarre as a ruler whose ability to select or read well ("eslire") informs his ability to judge echoes the ideal of the prince as reader in the *Policraticus*. Like the *Commedia*, Machaut's poem as a whole both illustrates the difficulty of interpreting ambiguous evidence and offers its readers an opportunity to enhance their skills in judgment.

Though scholars have suggested parallels between the works of Machaut and Dante (for example, Lanoue 365–67), and Machaut may have had access to manuscripts of Dante's works during visits to the papal court at Avignon (Earp 18), no clear evidence of Dante's influence on Machaut has emerged. The parallels noted here may simply result from common reading of the *Etymologiae* and *Policraticus*. When we turn to Gower's *Confessio amantis*, however, we find the influence of both Dante and Machaut. Though Gower's narrative of a lover's confession and instruction by the priest Genius also responds to the *Roman de la rose* (for example, Yeager 187), Genius refers to Dante's poetry in *Confessio* 7.2329–30, and Tamara O'Callaghan (144) notes that in *Confessio* 7.1303–38 Genius echoes Dante's description of the fixed stars in *Paradiso* 13.1–5. Kathryn Lynch argues for "a direct and conscious imitation of Dante on Gower's part" (191): in addition to sharing "a deep interest in language and poetic forms," the *Commedia* and the *Confessio* "trace the corruption of the individual and the different levels of his society explicitly to a misguided love. Both Dante's pilgrim and Amans have as their basic tasks the redefinition and redirection of a love that was earthly and romantic in its inception" (190). In the process, both heroes (named as Dante and Gower) "must be absolved of each of the seven deadly sins" (191).

R. F. Yeager sees influence of both Dante and Machaut in Gower's treatment of love and language (53, 66–67, 76–79, 111). More specifically, Yeager argues that the vision of love and just rule offered by Book 7 of the *Confessio* is similar to the celestial vision of *Paradiso* (278). For his part, Peter Nicholson sees parallels between Machaut's *Navarre* and the *Confessio*, including the use of allegorical characters without a dream frame, the poet's humorous self-projection into his poem, and the use of exempla or illustrative accounts by characters to support their arguments (14, 17, 79). Gower's interweaving of a narrative that explores the nature of love with extensive discussions of kingship and passages that explore the causes of troubling events in the recent past also links the *Confessio* with the *Navarre* and the *Commedia*.

Scholars continue to debate the chronology and circumstances that led to the different versions of the *Confessio* that began to circulate in the early 1390s: many manuscripts retain a Prologue that depicts the poem's origin in a command from King Richard II, while other versions suggest that its patron was Henry of Lancaster, Earl of Derby, who deposed Richard in 1399 and became Henry IV (McGerr, "Gower's *Confessio*" 45–46). Though the versions that praise Richard also exhort him to wise leadership in a turbulent time, the other versions depict England in dire need of leaders like Henry. All versions of the *Confessio* offer advice about kingship, despite the narrative focus on educating the hero, Amans, about the nature of love, and most critics recognize Book 7, in which the priestly confessor, Genius, relates Aristotle's advice to Alexander the Great, as a *Fürstenspiegel* borrowing from the *Secretum secretorum* (Ferster 109–10). Some view defining good kingship as the heart of Gower's project in this poem (O'Callaghan 140), with the narrative's focus on educating the poet-lover allowing the discussion to remain less overtly political and also reach out to a wider range of readers.

The *Confessio*'s stress on the importance of law to good kingship certainly suggests a link with the *Policraticus* (McGerr, "Gower's *Confessio*" 55–59), but it is in Gower's use of exemplary tales in the *Confessio* that J. Allan Mitchell sees a parallel with the *Policraticus* (115, 149). While Russell Peck argues that the *Confessio* highlights the importance of wise judgment to kingship through tales of kings who "respect law and listen to evidence in cases before them" (216, 223), Mitchell argues that the *Confessio* echoes the *Policraticus* in presenting reading itself as a means of developing

ethical judgment and using exempla to encourage readers to evaluate ambiguous evidence (40). Mitchell argues further that Genius's "rhetoric of exemplarity" reflects Gower's legal training in case-based analysis, which "initiates a new decision rather than imposing a preformulated one" and "inspires choice rather than impedes it" (60). Mitchell joins other critics who have noted how Gower uses both legal discourse and the exempla in the *Confessio* to create inconsistencies and tensions that push the reader to more careful reading and more finely nuanced judgments.[7] In these ways, the *Confessio* reflects the association of reading and law found in Isidore's *Etymologiae*, as well as the *Policraticus*.[8]

In my view, the *Confessio* also highlights links between reading and judgment through its extensive use of forms of the Middle English words *reden* ("read, judge, interpret, advise"), *areden* ("interpret, read"), and *red* ("advice, judgment") (Kurath s.vv. "*reden*" v.[1], "*areden*" v.[1], "*red*" n.[1]). The poem offers over 150 uses of these terms, highlighting the roles of reading and judging in the frame, the main narrative, and the embedded exempla. This process begins in the Prologue, where the narrator discusses Nebuchadnezzar's request that Daniel interpret his dream: "To Daniel his drem he tolde, / And preide him faire that he wolde / Arede what it tokne may" ("He related his dream to Daniel / And appealed to him courteously that he would / Interpret what it might mean"; Prol. 599–601).[9] After the account of this dream, we read, "This was the swevene which he hadde, / That Daniel anon aradde" ("This was the dream that he had / That Daniel soon interpreted"; Prol. 625–26). Daniel's reading of the king's dream offers an example of successful interpretation and advice; but not all examples of reading, advising, or judging in the poem will have such a clear outcome.

In Book 1, for example, we read a description of a woman awakened by an intruder and unable to judge what she should do: "Wherof in wommanysshe drede / Sche wok and nyste what to rede" ("Because of which, in womanly fear / She woke and did not know what to judge [about this]"; 1.913–14). In Book 2, we read about another person in need of advice: "Bot if he wolde axe eny red" ("But if he asked for any advice"; 2.2065). In many places, Genius introduces the illustrations he offers as tales he has read, such as "And of this point a tale I rede" ("And concerning this point, I read a tale"; 3.142). The poem thus intertwines reading, judging, and advising on multiple levels. In Book 4, Genius uses yet another

example of a king asking for advice: "The king Saul him axeth red" ("The king, Saul, asks him for advice"; 4.1940). Yet good advice is not always easy to find. In Book 5, Genius describes a king who judges he has only one choice for comfort in mourning his dead son: the king "Of confort knew non other red, / Bot let do make in remembrance / A faire ymage of his semblance" ("For comfort knew no other advice / Except to have made as a memorial / A fair image in his likeness"; 5.1532–34). In Book 5, Genius also points out that advice given to a king may be fraudulent: "He feignede him to conne arede / Of thing which after scholde falle" ("He feigned knowing how to advise / About things that would happen in the future"; 5.928–29). As a result, the poem suggests that the receiver of a "reading" must still remain a reader or judge of that interpretation.

Altogether, the *Confessio* contains 128 uses of *rede*, 23 uses of *red*, 8 uses of *rad*, 4 uses of *radde*, 3 uses of *arede*, 2 uses of *aradde*, and 1 use of *redeth*. The poem's many uses of *rede* and *red* pose the greatest challenges to the reader's skills of interpretation, because these forms are the most ambiguous and require consideration of context before the reader can judge the meaning in a specific instance. In some cases, more than one reading is possible; but, in a very few cases, *red* or *rede* definitely means the color red. Nevertheless, the poem calls attention to the link between reading and judging most clearly when it rhymes different meanings of *rede* in the same couplet. This occurs in ten passages, beginning in the Prologue, where the narrator expresses the concern "That who that al of wisdom writ / It dulleth ofte a mannes wit / To him that schal it aldai rede, / For thilke cause, if that ye rede, / I wolde go the middel weie" ("That the one who writes only about wisdom / Often dulls a man's wit / If someone reads it all day, / For this cause, if you advise, / I will choose the middle road"; Prol. 13–17). This passage is particularly interesting because it both refers to a reading experience and calls upon the reader of the passage to make a judgment about the narrator's choice of writing strategy. Subsequent couplets on *rede* also encourage careful judgment on the part of the poem's readers.

In the couplet on *rede* in Book 1, the narrator explains that he will tell about his own experience as an example for others to read: he writes "That men mowe take remembrance / Of that thei schall hierafter rede: / For in good feith this wolde I rede, / That every man ensample take" ("So that men may remember / What they shall hereafter read: / For in good

faith I would advise this, / That every man take it as an example"; 1.76–79). In this case, the narrator is the one advising readers about how to read the narrative about his experience that follows. Within the account given by the narrator, the priest Genius becomes both reader and advisor: "And for thin enformacion, / That thou this vice as I thee rede / Eschuie schalt, a tale I rede" ("And for your education, / So that, as I advise you, this vice you / Will avoid, I will read you a tale"; 1.2270–72). We again see this pairing of reading and advising by Genius in Book 2: "Now herkne a tale which I rede, / And understond it wel, I rede" ("Now listen to a tale I read / And understand it well, I advise"; 2.3185–86). In this last case, Genius gives Amans an interpretive role of his own in the process, since he is to understand as well as listen.

As a confessor, however, Genius also serves as judge, reading the lover's guilt or innocence, as well as judging which tales to use for his instruction. In the couplet in Book 3, we find Genius exhorting Amans to follow his advice for his "rest" (which could be earthly or eternal): "If thou wolt be thiself in reste, / Mi goode sone, as I thee rede. / For in another place I rede / Of thilke nimphe which Laar hihte" ("If you would like to be at rest yourself, / My good son, as I advise you. / For in another place I read / Of a certain nymph called Laar"; 3.816–19). Again in Book 4, Genius links his roles as advisor, judge, and reader: "To wisse thee, my sone, and rede, / Among the tales whiche I rede, / An old ensample therupon / Now herkne" ("To instruct and advise you, my son, / Among the tales which I read, / An old example of this / Now hear"; 4.73–76). In one couplet, one use of *rede* means the color red, rather than read or judge, which reminds the reader of the full range of options for judging the meaning of these letters: "The thridde, which comth after this, / Is hote Algol the clere rede, / Which of Satorne, as I may rede, / His kinde takth" ("The third, which comes after this, / Is called Algol the bright red, / Which from Saturn, as I may judge, / Its nature takes"; 7.1328–31). Readers thus cannot jump to conclusions on the meaning of *rede* in this poem and may learn to judge other parts of the poem carefully, as well.

The later examples of couplets rhyming on *rede* illustrate an important theme developing during the *Confessio*, that of reading as a means of self-instruction. In Book 5, Genius explains, "Forthi, mi sone, I wolde rede, / Be this ensample as thou myht rede, / Sech elles, wher thou wolt, thi grace, / And war thee wel in holi place" ("Therefore, my son, I would

advise, / By this example, as you may read, / Seek your grace elsewhere, wherever you will, / And guard yourself well in a holy place"; 5.7603–06); and in Book 7, Genius advises, "As be ensample thou myht rede; / And hold it in thi mynde, I rede" ("As an example you may read; / And hold it in your mind, I advise"; 7.2781–82). The poem's final rhyming couplet on *rede* appears in Book 8, in Genius's final counsel to Amans:

> Bot certes it is for to rewe
> To se love agein kinde falle,
> For that makth sore a man to falle,
> As thou myht of tofore rede.
> Forthi, my sone, I wolde rede
> To lete al other love aweie. (8.2016–21)

> (But certainly it is regrettable / To see love turn against nature, / For that makes a man fall very severely, / As you may read about before. / Therefore, my son, I would advise / To let all other love alone.)

This couplet links the lover's own reading with his counselor's advice; yet the reference to reading the tale that Genius has just narrated serves to remind readers of their own engagement as interpreters of the text.

Among the 146 references to books in the poem, there is a similar evolution. Throughout his interview with Amans, Genius presents himself as a reader of books, but he gradually begins to present the information he gives Amans as coming from books that Amans and others may read independently: Genius explains, "The bok of Troie whoso rede, / Ther mai he finde ensample in dede" ("If someone reads the book about Troy, / There he may indeed find an example"; 3.971–72); "Bot this a man mai understonde, / Who that these olde bokes redeth" ("But a man may understand this, / If he reads these old books"; 3.2306–07); "For if thou wolt the bokes rede" ("For if you wished to read the books"; 4.2034); and "In sondri bokes thou miht rede" ("In various books you might read"; 4.2362). Contrary to Guillaume's response to Bonneürté in the *Navarre*, Amans accepts the advice to read on his own: "Mi fader, if thei mihte spede / Mi love, I wolde his bokes rede" ("My father, if they might bring success to / My love, I would read his books"; 4.2675–76).

Nevertheless, that form of reading, with a conclusion predetermined,

is not the form that leads to ethical judgment. Genius continues to present reading as a form of inquiry that is deeper than Amans understands at this point: "in bokes as we finde" ("as we find in books"; 5.4109); "Mi sone, who that wole it seche, / In bokes he mai finde it write" ("My son, whoever wishes to seek it, / In books he may find in written"; 5.4238–39); "For in the bokes thou myht rede" ("For in the books you may read"; 6.962); "If thou these olde bokes seke" ("If you seek these old books"; 6.1148); "In boke as it is comprehended" ("As it is understood in a book"; 6.2435); and "So as the bokes ous enforme" ("As the books inform us"; 7.1182). These passages link reading with a process of seeking, finding, informing, and comprehending.

It is perhaps Amans's transformation into a new type of reader that helps to create a link between the central narrative of the poem and its frame as a poem for the sake of Gower's king and country: as a better reader, Amans, revealed to be the poet John Gower at the end of the poem, is better equipped to take on the role of an interpreter and advisor. Richard II's request for a poem from Gower in some versions of the Prologue portrays the king as a potential reader and therefore potentially a just king; but the poem explores more fully what the process of good reading involves in order for reading to lead to good judgment and good government. The *Confessio* suggests strongly that reading can serve as a means of inquiry and analysis that facilitates ethical judgment, for kings and others. Gower's poem presents a portrait of the prince as judge and therefore one for whom reading skills are essential; but, through the poet-protagonist's experience of the process of judgment within the narrative, the *Confessio* also presents its advice about royal judgment indirectly, at the same time that it sets up a dialogue between clerical and royal judgment and offers all readers a means of gaining greater skill in ethical judgment. It is therefore even more important to note that Gower presents this lesson in active reading in a poem in English, and the words he uses to highlight the challenges of reading carefully are words of English origin: *rede*, *arede*, and *red*. The *Confessio* therefore offers an important illustration of the new role of literature in English as a means of ethical inquiry and political commentary. The *Confessio* truly becomes a "bok for Engelondes sake" ("book for England's sake"; Prol. 24), not just because it translates information from other languages into English, but because

it explores the process of reading as a concern inherent in the English language.

The *Confessio* thus builds on the link between reading and legal judgment that grew out of the *Etymologiae* and the *Policraticus* and found poetic enhancement in the *Commedia* and the *Jugement dou roy de Navarre*. All three poems present a portrait of the prince as judge and therefore one for whom reading skills are essential; but each poem, through the poet-protagonist's experience of judgment, presents its advice more indirectly than did earlier mirrors for princes and also offers other readers a means of gaining greater skill in ethical judgment. These works offer further evidence that medieval authors conceived of reading as a means of analysis and inquiry that was important for ethical action (McGerr, *Chaucer's Open Books* 41–43). As Laurel Amtower argues, "Readers were not expected to passively absorb all ideas canonized by the codex. Instead, the individual reader was the ultimate authority for all acts of judgment and interpretation" (2). Borrowing from the discourses of political philosophy and law, as well as courtly romance and debate, Dante, Machaut, and Gower constructed vernacular works that highlight the difficult nature of judging the meaning of words and deeds, yet allow readers to appreciate poetry as a tool for exploring different modes of interpretation and achieving ethical judgment.

Notes

1. "Indeed, law (*lex*) is so named from 'reading' (*legere*)" (Isidore of Seville, ed. Barney 73).

2. "It indeed seems too little to have the law in one's purse, unless it is also faithfully protected in one's soul. It is to be read, therefore, all the days of his [the prince's] life. As a result of this, it is clearly accepted that it is necessary for princes, who are commanded to reflect daily upon the text of the divine law, to be proficient in letters. And perhaps you do not commonly find that priests are commanded to read the law daily. Yet the prince is to read it each and every day of his life because the day that the law is not read is not a day of his life, but the day of his death" (John of Salisbury, trans. Nederman 43–44).

3. Ferster points out that the *Secretum secretorum* presents itself as a reading exercise: Alexander has summoned Aristotle to him for advice, but Aristotle declines to come because of his age and "sends the book instead, as a substitute for

his presence" (44). Also, to prevent this secret information from falling into the wrong hands, Aristotle explains he will write some things in a hidden way, so Alexander will need to read closely to learn the truth (49–50). The text therefore requires interpretation and judgment on the part of the reader to discover where the secret of its true meaning resides (51). These elements remain part of many of the other medieval translations of this text into European languages.

4. See Pézard 1–37, 163–91; Curtius 52–53, 358, 364; and Tambling 63.

5. All quotations and translations from the *Commedia* are taken from the 1975 edition by Charles S. Singleton.

6. Quotations and translations from the *Navarre* come from the 1988 edition by R. Barton Palmer.

7. E.g., Olsson 14; Ferster 113–36; Allen 628; Simpson 14–15; van Dijk 5, 17; and Irvin 3, 118, 248.

8. For discussions of Gower's use of the *Policraticus* and *Etymologiae* for information in the *Confessio*, see Hamilton 9, 15, 17; and Yeager 56–57, 134, 136.

9. Quotations from the *Confessio* come from the revised edition by Russell Peck and Andrew Galloway (2005–06), with my own translations.

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7

Bohemian Gower

Confessio Amantis, Queen Anne, and Machaut's Judgment Poems

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The English poet John Gower (c. 1330–1408, author of the *Confessio Amantis*) has long been recognized as a Ricardian. That is, along with others, especially Chaucer, Langland, and the Pearl Poet, he contributed to the distinctive literary culture surrounding (and perhaps to a great extent inspired by) the English King Richard II (1367–1400).[1] This understanding, so fruitful for literary study, is founded in the words of the authors themselves. Indeed, the *Confessio*'s most famous passage describes how the elderly poet encountered his youthful king, quite by chance, as they were "rowende" on the river Thames. Richard invites the poet to join him on the royal barge, where in the course of their conversation he issues a command: that Gower—already the author of works in French and Latin—write "som newe thing" (Prol. *51).[2] The passage relates no further instructions from Richard on what this "newe thing" might be.

Although complaining of age and illness, Gower tells us that as Richard's "liege man" (Prol. *27), he has faithfully carried out the royal "heste" by producing this book, which he dutifully presents as an offering to his king (8.*3050 ff.)[3] While we can never know if the riverboat vignette is based on fact or simply fabricated (recent criticism leans to the belief that such a meeting did take place)[4], the participation of Gower in literary activity somehow connected to Richard is hardly open to doubt. Given that 1390 is the earliest date mentioned within the *Confessio*,[5] his work on the 32,000-line poem is likely to have been started as much as several years

before then, at a time when evidence indicates that Richard's government was sufficiently stable, at least for a time, to support a flowering of the arts.[6]

Confessio: What's New?

For all that, the poet John Gower wasn't only, or wasn't simply, a Ricardian. As background for the argument that follows, I will take a closer look at the seemingly bland expression "som newe thing," written by Gower, channeling Richard's instructions, to describe his English poem. What exactly is "newe" about the *Confessio*? In any obvious sense of the term, not much; as long remarked by scholars, Gower's practice was to recycle his favorite material, over and over again, in the course of his vast trilingual oeuvre, including the *Confessio* (Fisher 135; Nicholson 4). And on the same topic, why is this novelty presented as a thing to be desired, in a usage exceptional for Gower? A glance at the *Concordance* to the *Confessio* (Pickles and Dawson) confirms that for the English poet, "newe" and its derivatives more often than not mean something bad: for example, a faithless knight forsakes his lady "to love a newe"; the age of gold is long past, while the "newe" things of today—war, greed, disorder, the "secte of Lollardie"—bespeak a general decline, a world grown old.

The answer isn't far to seek. Gower uses his authorial voice (before taking on the *persona* of Amans) to explain, in passages introducing the Prologue and Book 1 of his *Confessio*, just how the reader will find the English poem to be a welcome "change" (1.9) from the unrelieved "wisdom" (Prol. 13) of its author's earlier works: in style, he will now "go the middel weie" to produce a work of "lust" as well as "lore," pleasure as well as profit (Prol. 19); in substance, while "lore" will certainly be present, he will focus on the pleasing subject of "love" (1.15). Gower was indeed up to something new, at least relative to his earlier works (the stridently didactic *Mirour de l'Omme* and *Vox Clamantis*), although he leaves the reader to discern more precisely what that new thing might be.

As explained by Peter Nicholson in his groundbreaking study, perhaps the most important novelty in the *Confessio* is its engagement with the legacy of Machaut, specifically his *dits amoureux* or narrative love poems.[7] Drawing the majority of his examples from the *Dit dou vergier*, Nicholson explains the Machaldian elements (not all of them present in every *dit*)

that Gower recombined in such an effective manner: first-person narration by an unhappy lover-persona who enters a beautiful springtime setting, where he encounters one or more allegorical figures who offer him instruction; prominent use of dialogue, even debate, between the author-persona and others; and a focus on the lover's moral education rather than success in love, which generally fails to occur (9–29). As earlier noted by J. A. Burrow ("The Portrayal" 6–7; see Nicholson), the hapless would-be Amans of the *Confessio*—a figure drawn with a studied resemblance to the author himself—owes much to the humble author-persona of several Machaldian *dits.* As summed up by Nicholson, "what the lover gains in each of these works is not the lady herself but a new way of experiencing love, a mixture of patience, trust, and commitment that is itself a sufficient reward for the lover" (21). For Machaut, the novelty of his work is a point of pride; according to the *Prologue* written later to introduce his collected works, he was personally chosen by Nature and Love to produce these "nouviaus dis amoureux plaisans" and "dis nouviaus" (1.5, 3.6, qtd. in Swift 21.)[8] As explained by R. Barton Palmer, Machaut was "an artist between times," a master of traditional material while boldly experimenting with the "original" new approaches made possible by the emerging modernity of his age ("Guillaume de Machaut" 244, 245).[9]

Among the legacies of the Machaldian *dit* to Gower, Nicholson notes the concern for "women who are victims of falsity in love" (24). Of the *dits amoureux,* the most explicitly preoccupied with women's suffering in love are the two judgment poems, *Le Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne* [Judgment of the King of Bohemia] and its sequel, significantly titled *Le Jugement dou Roy de Navarre contre le Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne* [The Judgment of the King of Navarre against the Judgment of the King of Bohemia.][10] In the earlier of the two poems, King John of Bohemia (a stylized version of the author's real-life patron), after hearing the arguments on both sides, pronounces the judgment that a man whose lover has proved unfaithful suffers more than a woman whose lover has died (1923–56). The later judgment poem is a palinode,[11] or as I prefer to call it, using a term found in fourteenth century French sources for this type of work, a *contredit.*[12]

In the *Navarre,* author-persona "Guillaume de Machaut" is confronted by a lady—significantly named Bonneürté (Happiness or Good Fortune)—who is enraged at the earlier judgment, which she claims is

hostile to women, thus contrary to love. Following a spirited exchange of arguments, reinforced with exempla, between the author-persona and the lady's attendants, all personified virtues, "Guillaume" is sentenced by the King of Navarre (also the author's patron) to perform a penance: the creation of three lyric poems on women's suffering in love (4173–94). Only one lyric conforming to this directive, the "Lay dou Plour," is attached to several MSS of the *Navarre*. In the closing lines of his *Navarre*, the author-persona offers the book itself as part of his restitution for the objectionable material on women and love as found in the earlier judgment poem (4199–205).

The pervasive impact of the *dits amoureux* (including the judgment poems) on Chaucer's poetry has been copiously documented by scholarship, albeit until recent decades with incomprehension and even scorn for the artistry of Machaut. To give an example relevant to the present study, *Le Jugement dou Roy de Navarre* has long been recognized as a hypotext for Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, especially its *Prologue*. In his foundational study, Robert M. Estrich sums up the parallel plots of *Navarre* and the *Legend*: "the guilty poet brought before a court, condemned, after argument over the case, for his sin, and sentenced to write for penance . . . another document in the popular feminism debate" (22), all in the critic's view a case study in Chaucer's "highly individual genius" spinning into gold "the conventional literary stuff of his time" (21).[13]

Likewise for many years now, the near-contemporary *Confessio* and *Legend of Good Women* have been noted to display a range of similarities in plot and subject matter,[14] although until recent decades with little respect for either poem. In a welcome renewal of interest, the relationship was insightfully explored by Joyce Coleman ("A Bok for King Richardes Sake"), who credibly posits a common origin for the poems in the courtly milieu of Richard and his queen Anne; indeed, if Chaucer's poem is understood literally, "Anne herself issu[ed] the commission for *The Legend of Good Women*" (114). If the *Navarre* provided a paradigm for Chaucer's *Legend*, it follows that the *Confessio* is also a creative reworking of the *Navarre*, and Queen Anne—Anne of Bohemia (1366–94)—was a serious patron in her own right who exercised a formative influence on the *Confessio*, just as she is known to have done in the case of the *Legend*.[15] After examining the evidence for Anne's creative presence in the work, I will provide an overview (as space permits—much remains to be done) of

insights to be gained on the *Confessio* through the context of the second Machaldian judgment poem, with particular focus on Gower's exempla of good women, of such evident interest to Anne.

Confessio: Bohemian Queen

While King Richard is honored by name in the earliest and most popular version of the *Confessio* as its raison d'être, Queen Anne is not. To the reader schooled in the *dits amoureux*, however, that fact doesn't mean she isn't there. As noted in the foundational study by Daniel Poirion (*Le Poète et le Prince* 196–97), a poet's *louange* ("praise") of a powerful woman at court was generally different from the *éloge* addressed to the king; while the latter might be explicit, the former was more likely to be coded with a *signal* such as a riddling wordplay on her name, in a habit of discretion going back to the troubadours. Within the *Confessio*, perhaps the most explicit homage to Anne is found in a scene long recognized for its family resemblance to Chaucer's procession of faithful lovers in *Legend of Good Women* (F 209 ff.)[16] Before Amans is finally cured of his passion, he falls into a swoon (8.2449) and in this altered state, observes a crowd of men and women past and present, representing the diverse conditions of love. The sizeable youthful contingent are portrayed with an idealized resemblance to the young English queen and king with their retinue:

> The newe guise of Beauwme [Bohemia] was there,
> With sondri thinges wel devised,
> I sih, wherof thei ben queintised.
> It was al lust that thei with ferde,
> Ther was no song that I ne herde,
> Which unto love was touchende; (8.2470–75)

The "sondri thinges" noted in the passage are generally glossed as a reference to the pearls (8.2469) and other elegant personal adornments favored by Anne; at the time, "'Bohemia' was a byword for chic" and synonymous with "beautiful style" in the visual arts (Thomas 1). The language of the passage encodes a further layer of meaning, however, as confirmed by its echoes with the Prologue and Book 1, quoted above. "Newe . . . thinges" may be poems, especially those works of (virtuous) "lust" and "love" that Gower in his *Confessio* has newly embraced as a

paradigm. That is, the poet is signaling his homage to the Machaldian *dit amoureux*, so preeminently associated with the King of Bohemia, his daughter Bonne, other descendants, and now the Bohemian king's granddaughter by Emperor Charles IV, Richard's Queen Anne.

Although Richard's family was not devoid of prestigious connections to authorship (his grandmother Philippa of Hainault was long the patron of Jean Froissart),[17] Anne's pedigree was far more closely associated with the greatest literary lights of Europe,[18] who worked in a number of languages; I will focus here mainly on the French tradition so important to Gower and germane to the present study. In addition to Anne's grandfather, Machaut's patron John of Luxembourg, who famously appears as a character in the first judgment poem, her aunt Bonne of Luxembourg (identified by a pun on her name) is mentioned as the beloved lady and patroness in Machaut's influential *Remede de Fortune*. The second judgment poem may have originally been intended for Bonne, who seems to be honored through the character Bonneürté.[19] Following Bonne's death in 1349, Machaut dedicated the book to her son-in-law (as of 1352), King Charles of Navarre. Anne's paternal half-uncle Wenceslas of Brabant, with whom she stayed on her journey to England (Thomas 1), together with his wife Jeanne, were prolific patrons of artists and poets, including Froissart (Wilkins 264 ff.) In his foundational study "The Genius of the Patron," Douglas Kelly explains how the royal patron might be more, and/or strategically portrayed as more, than the passive recipient of a work: he might be honored as the true fountainhead of its words, ideas, or both, with the poet as his helpful collaborator or even a humble amanuensis. For example, as a poet in his own right, Wenceslas contributed lyrics to Froissart's *dit Meliador*, while Machaut inscribes Jean de Berry (Anne's first cousin through his mother Bonne, and himself a proficient lyrist) as the true author of the sentiments expressed in *Le Dit de La Fontaine amoureuse* (Kelly, passim, esp. 3, 5).

In Anne's lifetime, then, "Bohemia" suggested for the literate Englishman not a remote or peripheral place, but the epitome of "international court culture," to use the influential expression of Gervase Mathew (*The Court of Richard II*). French was its *lingua franca*. Royal promotion of all the arts, and especially of literature in the vernacular, was central to the movement, in which multilingualism was prized. Anne's father Emperor Charles IV (a correspondent of Petrarch), among many other intellectual

achievements, promoted translation and composition in the local vernaculars of Czech and German (Wallace 359). Also a feature of court culture (see Mathew 3 and passim) was the importance of women as patrons and audience for the arts, including literature. Anne's family tree, as noted by Alfred Thomas (2, 33–49) had long been distinguished by women as patrons, readers, and even writers themselves. As the Middle Ages advanced, Bohemian women played a role in inspiring profeminine contributions to the long-running literary exchange that came to be known as the *querelle des femmes*. For example, Petrarch addressed a treatise to Empress Anne, third wife of Anne's father Charles IV for whom our Anne was named, titled *De Laudibus Feminarum*, expounding on how "Anne's sex is noble . . . for its intellect, for its manifold virtues, and for the glory and accomplishments of the empire" (qtd. in Thomas 17).

The role of learned queen, patron of the arts, and promoter of literature in the local vernacular was already mapped out for Anne by the time of her arrival in England in 1381, and clearly, she played it herself, with skill. There is no reason to doubt that she quickly learned to speak and to read books in English, which was the politically prudent course for a foreign-born queen whose continental origin and retinue were far from universally popular in England.[20] Her only two surviving letters were dictated in French (Thomas 44), but this practice was typical for English royals until the fifteenth century. Recent scholarship has questioned the veracity of a Lollard tract claiming that Anne owned an English translation with glosses of all four gospels (Taylor 103–06); however, given the linguistic complexity of the English poems explicitly dedicated to her (Chaucer's *Legend*, Clanvowe's *Boke of Cupid*,[21] and, I believe, the *Confessio*), it is a near-certainty that whatever her practice in Bible-reading, she was at least capable of studying the New Testament in English. She seems to have readily adjusted to a literary scene where the Machaldian *dit amoureux* had already been introduced as Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, a work that features a pun on the name of the heroine based on the similar homage to Anne's aunt Bonne of Luxembourg in the *Remede de Fortune* (Minnis 79–80). The same evidence indicates that she was especially interested in encouraging the *dit*, a genre with a history of association with powerful women.

If Anne was interested, so was Richard, and vice versa. By all accounts, they were exceptionally devoted to each other from the time of their

arranged marriage (on January 20, 1382) when they were both fifteen years old. Unlike most royal couples of the era, they were almost never apart, and there is no evidence of infidelity on either side. All evidence indicates that Richard was proud of his marriage to "the emperor's daughter" and of the "beautiful style" associated with her.[22] When Anne died in 1394, still in her twenties, Richard was so distraught that he ordered the destruction of his house at Sheen, the place of her death; he seems never to have recovered his balance, emotional or political (Saul, *Richard II* 93–94, 455–63).

Once "the genius of Anne" (to adapt Douglas Kelly's phrase) is appreciated as a motivating force in the *Confessio*, it is possible to recognize other signals of her presence, most of them with parallel instances long since noted in the works of Chaucer, especially *The Legend of Good Women*. The most pervasive of these, I believe, is the prominence of exemplary women in the English masterpiece, especially figures already associated with the medieval "case for women."[23] The first example can be found at the very start of the poem, in the Latin lines placed at the head of the Prologue:

> Torpor, ebes sensus, scola parva labor minimusque
> Causant quo minimus ipse minora canam:
> Qua tamen Engisti lingua canit Insula Bruti
> Anglica Carmente metra iuvante loquar (1–4)

> (Listlessness, dull discernment, little schooling and least labor are the causes by which, I least of all, sing things all the lesser. Nonetheless, in the tongue of Hengist in which the island of Brutus sang, with Carmentis' aid I will utter English verses.)[24]

The intelligent, multilingual Anne would surely have noted with pleasure this opening reference to Carmentis, female inventor of the Roman alphabet, and already a staple exemplum in arguments (for example, by Boccaccio, Jehan Le Fèvre, and later, Christine de Pizan) defending women against the imputation of intellectual inferiority to men.[25] In a discussion of labor as antidote to sloth, Gower tips his hat to the female inventors of historical record (4.2435–38), also a topos of the "case for women."[26] In several of his most celebrated tales, Gower paid homage to Anne in a role for which she was already well known to her contemporaries: the

personification of "wifely counsel," averting bloodshed as she intercedes with her powerful husband on behalf of unfortunates who had incurred his wrath. Focusing on "Humility and the Tale of Three Questions," Misty Schieberle has noted the prominent examples of women as mediators offering good counsel to rulers in the *Confessio*. Of course, this role (with its Marian echoes) was conventional and long accepted for English queens (Schieberle, "Thing Which Man Mai Noght Areche" 98 ff.), but it seems to have especially suited the gentle personality of Anne. I think it is a mistake to see the topos of the *mediatrix* as necessarily critical of Richard; rather than evidence of excessive anger on the king's part, the tableau of the intercessor kneeling before her royal spouse was understood by everyone concerned as a ritual which opened the way for a king to "change his mind and exercise clemency (often the politically astute move) without appearing unmanly" (Taylor 101; see also Strohm 102–04).

Like her namesake in the *Legend*, Gower's Alcestis appears to have been created to honor the reputation of Anne.[27] Her traditional life story is altered both by Chaucer and Gower to make the ancient queen not only a paragon of unselfish love but also an active intercessor, in the *Confessio* on behalf of her husband, for whose life she pleads (Burke, "Sources and Significance" 12–13). As in *The Legend of Good Women*, Gower's exemplum of Alcestis features an oblique tribute to Anne through honorific wordplay on her name, which means "grace" or "mercy,"[28] as he sums up the moral to her story:

> So mai a man be reson taste,
> Hou next after the God above
> The trouthe of women and the love,
> In whom that alle *grace* is founde,
> Is mytiest upon this grounde
> And most behovely manyfold. (7.1944–49, emphasis added)

In the *Confessio*, the poet valorizes women characters as intercessors in order to serve an irenic discourse considerably at odds with his earlier *Vox Clamantis*, where he praised the appalling violence of Richard's father, Edward the Black Prince, in Spain and France (Macaulay 6.937 ff. [vol. 4.257]; trans. Stockton 242). All evidence indicates that he made this alteration to honor the current policy of his king, who was pursuing a course of reconciliation with France, perhaps in part to emulate the *pax*

carolina achieved by his imperial father-in-law (Saul, *Richard II* 204 ff.; Thomas 13–14).[29]

From *Contredit* to *Dit*

Although many commonalities remain to be explored, discerning readers of Machaut's *dits amoureux* have found much to recognize with pleasure in Gower's *Confessio*, including several topoi already noted above. Quite in line with the French tradition is Gower's sophisticated play with a "poetic I" that strategically changes identity over the course of the work; for example, Ardis Butterfield ("Articulating the Author") has examined the complex interplay among the "four John Gowers" whose voices can be distinguished in the English poem. Recent decades have seen an explosion in groundbreaking studies of Machaut; it is impossible even to sample this body of work without noting the potential for fruitful comparison with Gower. To give just a few examples, there is Cerquiglini-Toulet's chapter, "Le clerc-écrivain," which explores the permutations of an authorial "je" who sometimes takes on the role of "amant" (*Un Engin si Soutil* 107–38).

Closer to the topic of this essay, we have R. Barton Palmer's analyses of reflexivity and transtextuality in *Le Jugement dou Roy dou Navarre*. Here again, the parallels with the English poet are difficult to miss. Like Machaut, Gower makes "himself as poet his own subject" (Palmer, "Transtextuality" 286), especially in the frame-narrative to the *Confessio*, and like Machaut, he is "transtextual" in his claim of producing "som newe thing," in the process making his former poems a current subject in order to correct and transform something he has already written (see Palmer, "Transtextuality" 288; also see Palmer, "Metafictional Machaut"). To be sure, the English poet is understated in refashioning his own material, compared with Machaut; Gower was not one to recant or do public penance for an earlier work, even as a literary game.

Also like the *dit*, the *Confessio* is self-reflective, but it is also communicative, indeed instructive. The *dit* and its progeny are works of didactic import as well as experiment with such devices as mise-en-abîme.[30] Nicholson explains the Machaldian legacy to Gower as the "fundamental assumption . . . that love is neither a sin in itself nor exempt from moral choices, and therefore an area where ethical guidance is not only

appropriate, but necessary" (37). For Nicholson, the complexity of the works, including their use of dialogue, provides an expressive medium for the illumination of complicated moral issues. Strikingly similar language is used in recent scholarship on Machaut's judgment poems, for example, by Elizabeth Eva Leach (*Guillaume de Machaut* 169) and Daisy Delogu ("Laissier le mal, le bien eslire"), both on the centrality of ethics in the works and the necessity for a searching intelligence on the part of the reader to untangle the complexity of issues under discussion. One of these, of course, is the nature and status of women. In particular, both the *Navarre* and the *Confessio* engage with the clerkly misogynistic tradition, and both employ exempla of good women—often the same women, and/or the same kind of story—to serve a profeminine polemic, overtly in the *Navarre*, implicitly (as we shall see) in the *Confessio*.

Even if the historical Machaut was never called to account for teachings allegedly offensive to women, I see no reason to doubt that women as audience, even before Christine de Pizan, were interested participants in the *querelle des femmes* and attentive to its associated literary productions. (As discussed above, all evidence indicates that this was the case with Anne.) In the comparison that follows, necessarily selective, I will attempt to shed light on common themes in the profeminine tradition as well as significant differences between the *Navarre* and the *Confessio*. Most important, Machaut sets up a debate between the misogynistic tradition (defended by "Guillaume," his clerkish poetic-I), and the feminine voices of his opposition (Cayley 117); Gower brings forward all the standard characters and tropes of the "case for women," but almost never gives voice to the misogynistic arguments that made it imperative for that case to be made. In the *Confessio*, so to speak, the profeminine *contredit* has been re-created as a statement in its own right, simply a *dit*.

In a topos at odds with twenty-first century feminist discourse, both poems give the most honored place to women whose major, sometimes only, claim to fame is that they suffered (or died) for love. Both tell the stories of Dido, Thisbe, Ariadne, and Medea, with emphasis (wherever possible) on their victimization by men. In the *Navarre*, "Guillaume"'s opponents deploy these exempla to support a serious profeminine argument, that women's superior capacity for suffering bears witness to their greater capacity for love:

On ne porroit trouver en homme
Si grant loyauté comme en femme,
Ne jamais d'amoureuse flame
Ne seroient si fort espris,
Comme seroit dame de pris.
Car quant il y a meins d'amour,
Il y a tant meins de dolour,
Puis que ce vient a mal sentir. (2810–17)

Loyalty as great as that of woman
Cannot be found in any man;
Nor would men ever be as deeply
Inflamed by the spark of love
As a worthy lady would.
For when there is less love,
There is that much less suffering
Because it comes from feeling pain. (trans. Palmer, *An Anthology*)

As a much longer poem, the *Confessio* naturally has more exempla of every type, including this one, than the *Navarre*; other female martyrs to love in the English poem are Virginia, Jephthah's daughter,[31] Phyllis, Procne and Philomela, Deianira, Deidamia, Canace, Cleopatra, Lucretia, Alcestis, and Alcyone.

A good choice for comparison with a thematic counterpart in the *Navarre* is Gower's tale of Alcyone (4.2927 ff.), a woman who dreamed that her husband Ceyx (away on a voyage) had drowned. The next morning, she rushed to the seacoast, saw her husband's dead body in the waves, and threw herself into the water after him (the gods, taking pity, turned them both into sea birds). In the *Navarre*, a young Parisian girl hears that her lover has died, takes to her bed, and despite all efforts to cure her, resolutely gives up her life to lovesickness (1863 ff.) In both stories, the heroine's self-sacrifice is movingly told, but they are used quite differently. In the *Navarre*, the exemplum serves to counter "Guillaume"'s argument that a woman is inconstant, that her grief for her beloved will diminish over time. Not so, argue the ladies, according to this story as well as the example of the female turtledove (1635 ff.) In the *Confessio*, nowhere is it said that women are changeable in their love, so there is no need for

a defensive counterargument. Instead, Genius offers the exemplum of a woman's death for love, but with a completely different moral: the truthfulness of dreams (4.2918 ff.)! In the *Confessio*, the catalogue of heroines is unmistakably drawn from profeminine polemic, but their virtue (especially but not limited to their fidelity in suffering) is taken for granted, presented as a "new normal" detached from any controversy over their moral qualities.[32]

In their engagement with the ethics of love, both Machaut and Gower present rather unusual stories with the evident purpose of arguing that true love respects the woman as a person in her own right and not a mere reflection on the honor of her man. Responding to "Guillaume"'s exemplum of a "noble cleric" who lost his sanity on being informed that his beloved had taken a husband, Charité responds that the young man should have been happy in his lady's change of status, so fortunate for her, just as a great man who owns a vineyard would be pleased to see his tiny "ente" ("grafting") transformed into a lovely, tall, and fruitful tree (Machaut, *Navarre* 2434 ff.) In the *Confessio*, Gower reproduces a time-honored profeminine topos in his encomiums to Lucretia, the rape victim who nobly sacrificed her life to redeem her husband's honor (7.4985 ff., 8.2632 ff.) Elsewhere, however, he offers an exemplum (against hypocrisy in love) where the scenario plays out with reconciliation, not the woman's suicide. Essentially a rape victim, Paulina is deceived by the crafty hypocrite Mundus into an extramarital assignation she never would have chosen. On her discovering what had happened, the heartbroken Paulina is comforted by her husband, then by her fellow citizens; through a process of mutual grieving, both marriage and community are restored to wholeness, while only the offender is punished (4.984 ff.) In both exempla, an innocent woman achieves (or regains) the happiness she deserves, with no suggestion that she ought to have martyred herself out of deference to a suitor or a husband.

In contrast with the *Navarre*, and doubtless due to its origin in the courtly milieu of Richard and Anne, the *Confessio* gives special emphasis to conjugal love, usually with encomiums to faithful wives (for example, 8.2605 ff.), who are significantly characterized as exemplary, not extraordinary, for their estate (8.2618). Occasionally, however, the poet offers an exemplum of married life with more complicated issues and a bit of a topical edge. In a warning against boasting in love, he describes how Albinus

marries Rosemond after having killed her father in battle and making an ornamental goblet out of his skull (which he had covered with gold and precious jewels). In a fatal moment of pride, he persuaded his wife to drink from it, then boasted to her of its origin (1.2551 ff.), thus prompting her revenge and the ultimate downfall of both. The story implicitly recalls how Richard's father Edward Prince of Wales had killed Anne's grandfather John of Bohemia at Crécy, then, as legend would have it, scavenged from the king's dead body his crest with the motto "Ich dien" (possessed by the English Prince of Wales to this day). For any couple, but a king and queen especially, true love requires a certain humility, along with a strategic forgetfulness of elements in their troubled mutual past.

Also in notable contrast with the *Navarre* (as well as the *Legend*) is Gower's much more sparing use of the *persona* of harried court poet reluctantly grinding out a work at the royal command, in fear of revenge by the powerful should he fail to produce what is asked for. I believe this is a topos understood by all concerned to be offered in fun, and not a serious complaint by the poet, much less a harsh critique of his patron. In historical fact, all the writers under present discussion died of old age, in comfort, with their heads on; they did not take the risk of giving offense to their king, or queen. Still, where examples of good women are concerned, both Chaucer and Machaut appear to be labored, unnatural, "insincere," and both give voice to the misogynistic tradition while defending their earlier work. Gower does nothing of the sort in his *Confessio*. He assumes the "reluctant author" persona only in the frame narrative to the poem, and only in the mildest of terms: although old and ill, he has produced this work at the king's command. Within the body of the poem, he appears to revel in traditional stories, arguments, and topoi (such as the female intercessor) that support the profeminine argument, and a number of his most justly celebrated tales are "legends of good women." Never does he imply that he is only making a "case for women" in deference to an authority beyond his control, nor (as observed above) does he even draw much attention to the "case for women" as open to argument at all.

Gower's creative interaction with the *Navarre* is also reflected in the scene of judgment that concludes the amatory portion of his poem. In the *Confessio*, the misogynistic tradition is never put on trial, because it has simply disappeared. As a loyal servant of Venus, Gower's Amans-persona calls for a different kind of judgment: a reward (of some kind)

for his long-time unrequited passion (1.123 ff.) Near the end of the poem, after making his confession, but still as Amans, he will be more specific, articulating slightly different versions of his "querele" (8.2272) presented first to Cupid, then to Venus: either take away the wound of love, or let it be fulfilled; either reward my love as I deserve, or let me die (8.2280 ff.) Only one of these wishes can or will be granted. Following the visionary appearance of the famous lovers, the god's decision is handed down: as Cupid removes the arrow, Amans is relieved both of his love and his suffering. As the name "John Gower" is restored to him by a surprisingly moral incarnation of Venus, bringing the "poetic-I" closer to his existential counterpart the poet, the final judgment of his case is revealed to be transtextual in nature: he must return to work on the books of "vertu moral" (8.2925) such as he used to write.

This is in artful contrast with the penance laid upon "Guillaume" of the *Navarre*, who must produce something new and different in restitution for his heresy against women and love. For Gower, the fictional end of his love is transmuted into an announcement of his retirement from writing poems about love.[33] Where the poetry of love is concerned, in a quite Machaldian exchange of roles, he transfers the task of composition from himself, to the genius of his amorous youthful patron, inspired by Anne:

> But now that I am feble and oold,
> And to the worschipe of mi king
> In love above alle other thing
> That I this book have mad and write,
> Mi muse dooth me for to wite
> That it is to me for the beste
> Fro this day forth to take reste,
> That I no moore of love maake.
> But *he which hath of love his maake*
> It sit him wel to singe and daunce,
> And do to love his entendance
> In songes bothe and in seyinges
> After the lust of his pleyinges
> For he hath that he wolde have:
> But where a man schal love crave
> And faile, it stant al ootherwise. (8.*3070–85, emphasis added)

These lines suggest that yes, the *Confessio* was originally created as a love poem to honor the great love between Richard and his "maake" (8.3078*), Queen Anne. Beyond that, Gower expresses his expectation that further "songes" and "seyinges," literary creations, will arise from their royal partnership. Throughout the *Confessio* as a whole, however, the inspiration of Anne is more pervasive and powerful than that of her spouse. Although the poet could and did delete the presence of Richard from his poem, to replace it with a generic dedication to England and praise for the future Henry IV, it wasn't possible to remake the poem as post-Bohemian: without the great themes and approaches of the Machaldian *dit amoureux*, especially the judgment poems, the work would consist of nothing at all.

Sadly, Anne would not live to continue or consolidate her role in the late fourteenth-century flowering of English belles lettres. Some years later, once Richard had been deposed and murdered, Gower would disrespect the memory of his queen by ridiculing a pitiful effort in her most famous role, as he recounts her failed attempt to intercede for the life of Ricardian loyalist Simon Burley.[34] For all of Gower's disillusionment with Richard, however (even if sincere and founded in fact),[35] nothing can obscure the brightness of Queen Anne's most important legacy: the great English-Bohemian love poem, *Confessio Amantis*.

Notes

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1. See the foundational study by J.A. Burrow, *Ricardian Poetry*; for a cogent argument that Richard did in fact encourage *belles lettres*, including the works of the Pearl Poet, see Bennett.

2. All quotations from *Confessio Amantis* are taken from Russell Peck's edition. Citations with asterisks (following Peck's edition of the poem) refer to the earliest or "Ricardian" recension of the *Confessio*, which has a few short but crucial passages that in later or alternate recensions were excised and replaced with material of equal line numbers. These "Ricardian" passages include the story of the encounter on the Thames and the dedications to Richard.

3. For this passage from Book 8, see *Confessio*, ed. Peck, vol. 1, p. 352. (Hereafter

cited as, e.g., 1.352.) Gower prepared two alternate and presumably later recensions of the *Confessio* with dedications to Henry of Bolingbroke, the future King Henry IV. To this present study, it is unimportant whether Gower revised his poem out of disillusionment with Richard and a growing allegiance to Henry, or created a variant *Confessio* in Henry's honor that was originally intended to coexist with, not supersede, the "Ricardian" version; see Diller 40. Of the three recensions, the first (with praise of Richard) survives in the greatest number of MSS; see Pearsall, with discussion by Coleman 107. It was not uncommon for authors of the time to have variant MS editions of the same work custom-made, concurrently, with slightly different content chosen as appropriate for different patrons (e.g., see Cerquiglini-Toulet, *A New History* 42).

4. See Coleman 106, 118nn15–19.

5. In the marginal note to Prol. 331; see Macaulay, vol. 2, p. xxi and vol. 2, p. 13n331. (Hereafter citing vol. and p. number, e.g., 2.xxi.)

6. Bennett 11 ff.; Peck, "Politics and Psychology" 230n37.

7. Although much remains to be explored, Nicholson, in *Love and Ethics*, is not the only critic to discuss the connection of Gower's *Confessio* to Machaut's narrative *dits amoureux*; in addition to Burrow, "Portrayal of Amans," see Zeeman; Calin, *French Tradition* 385–98; Butterfield, "Articulating the Author"; Butterfield, "*Confessio Amantis* and the French Tradition"; and Schieberle, "Controlling the Uncontrollable." Gower was also well versed in the lyric poetry of Machaut and his contemporaries, as shown by his *Cinkante Balades* (ed. and trans. Yeager, *John Gower*); see Cressman; Butterfield, "French Culture" 107 ff.; Yeager, "John Gower's Audience" and "John Gower's French." Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy*, examines Gower's *Balades* and Machaut's lyric poetry to make her case that late medieval English literary culture was "Anglo-French rather than narrowly English," 248 and passim. This observation applies equally well to the narrative *dits amoureux* and the *Confessio*.

8. "Things" or "choses" could refer to literary compositions: Christine de Pizan referred to her recent works as "nouvelles choses"; see Laidlaw 134; Machaut refers to lyrics and music as well as *dits* in his mention of "le livre ["the codex of collected works"] ou je mets toutes mes choses" ("the book where I put all my things") (Swift 19).

9. Of course, I am not claiming that Machaut was the first or the only poet to say "new" in a context of self-praise; elsewhere, I have traced the topos to Euripides and Aristophanes.

10. All citations to the judgment poems in English are from R. Barton Palmer, trans., *An Anthology of Medieval Debate Poetry*; all citations to the judgment poems in French are from Palmer, ed. and trans., *The Judgment of the King of Bohemia* and Palmer, ed. and trans., the *Judgment of the King of Navarre*.

11. That is, a retraction and correction of an earlier misogynistic work. For discussion of *Navarre* within the history of the palinode from ancient times, see Percival, esp. 161–70.

12. This expressive term is found in scribal notes to at least three MSS of Jehan Le Fevre's *Livre de Leesce* [Book of Gladness], a Middle French palinode of c. 1380 with parallels to *Navarre*; for examples, see Burke, trans., *The Book of Gladness* 27n50.

13. Estrich 20 credits Kittredge with first noting the connection between *Navarre* and Chaucer's *Legend*; more recent comparative studies evidence respect for the artistry of both authors: see Palmer, "Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*," and Calin, *French Tradition* 289–301.

14. On the commonalities between the *Confessio* and the *Legend*, in addition to Coleman, see Bech; Macaulay 3.545–46; Fisher 235–50; Peck, "Politics and Psychology" 230n37; and Bowers.

15. Wallace 365–78; Thomas xii, 17, 44, 92; Taylor 106 ff. Another work evidently addressed to Anne is Clanvowe's *dit*-like *Boke of Cupid*; see n. 21, below. Höfler's detailed biography *Anna von Luxemburg*, still often cited as authoritative, surprisingly makes no mention of Chaucer, the *Legend*, or literary patronage. The common origin of the *Legend* and the *Confessio*, in the courtly pastimes of Richard and Anne, is the best explanation of why Gower omitted his famous greeting to Chaucer (8.*2941 ff., *Confessio*, ed. Peck, 1: 349) from the *Confessio* MSS he had custom-made for the future Henry IV; it simply wasn't relevant outside the Ricardian circle. There is no need to assume that Gower made this alteration as the result of a falling-out with Chaucer; for a review debunking the dubious evidence for such a "quarrel," see Burke, "Genial Gower" 39–41 and 57n6.

16. See Macaulay's note on the passage: 3.545–46. Also see *Confessio* 8.3078*, discussed below, where Anne is referred to directly, albeit anonymously, as Richard's "maake."

17. See Mathew 14. Chaucer wrote his very Machaldian *Book of the Duchess* for Richard's uncle John of Gaunt; Richard's cousin (who was Gaunt's father-in-law) Henry of Grosmont wrote *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines*; on the latter and its connection to Richard's grandfather Edward III, see Yeager, "Gower's French Audience."

18. For an overview relevant to the present study, see Wilkins, "A Pattern of Patronage."

19. Suggested by Poirion 194; see the discussion of probable homages to Bonne in Earp 25–26, 33, 209.

20. Anne's father and grandfather John of Luxembourg had fought against the English in the Hundred Years War. On Anne's unpopularity as a new bride, and the

failure of the marriage as a diplomatic alliance, see Saul, *Richard II* 90–95; on English dislike for Anne's Bohemian retinue, see Wallace 361, and Suchý 11–12.

21. *The Boke of Cupid* is a dream vision debate between an owl and a nightingale; the dedication to "the quene" appears at 281–85; see editor Symons's note on the passage in Clanvowe. If Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* 1.171 is in fact a shout-out to Anne (see Wallace 362), she must have been expected to read with discernment that intricate work.

22. On Richard's devotion to Anne's Bohemian family (which would turn to rivalry on her death), see Saul, *Richard II* 92–93nn35–37; on the new queen's connection with "style," see Wallace 362–63.

23. To borrow a phrase from the title of the groundbreaking study by Alcuin Blamires, *The Case for Women in Medieval Culture*.

24. Trans. Galloway, in Peck, ed. *Confessio Amantis* 1: 65n1.

25. Boccaccio, *Famous Women*, trans. Brown 105 ff.; Le Fèvre, *Le Livre de Leësce*, ed. Van Hamel, 3618 ff. (trans. Burke, *The Book of Gladness* 104); Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. Richards, 70 ff.

26. For example, Minerva is honored as such by Boccaccio, *Famous Women*, trans. Brown, 35 ff., and Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. Richards, 73 ff.

27. Strohm (105 ff.) recounts how the historical Anne was expected to act the role of intercessor and did so repeatedly; he goes on to provide a nuanced discussion of how "the relation between [Chaucer's] Alcestis and Anne" can be explained through "shared protocols of queenly behavior" (116, 117).

28. In Chaucer's *Legend*, the accused narrator prays to Alceste (whose name he does not yet know) for "grace" (F 459); at F 504, he will learn "what she is," that is, "grace" or "mercy" personified: for discussion of the subtle allusion to Anne in the wordplay, see Lange.

29. For more on the peaceful agenda and rhetoric of Gower's *Confessio* compared to his earlier *Vox*, see Burke, "'The Voice of One Crying'" 129–30.

30. Or as Calin expresses it, " . . . métatextes, intertextualité, bien sûr. Mais ces contre-textes [e.g. *Le Jugement dou Roy de Navarre*] . . . se réfèrent également à la vie" ("Contre la fin'amor?" 80).

31. Gower had a precedent for his exempla of Virginia and Jephthah's daughter as Le Fèvre had included them to his honor roll of female martyrs for their chastity: see *Le Livre de Leesce*, ed. Van Hamel, 2492 ff., 2527 ff. (trans. Burke, *Book of Gladness* 95). Gower's interest in creating a catalogue of good women is shown by his collecting examples from a range of sources for the topos.

32. The sheer absence of misogynistic discourse from the *Confessio*, even as a straw man for rebuttal, has long intrigued me: see Burke, "Women in John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*" 240 and passim.

33. Like many such announcements, this one would not be carried out exactly. Aside from creating an alternate version of his *Confessio Amantis* (see n. 3), he went on to present his *Cinkante Balades* (on the subject of love) to the newly crowned Henry IV: see ed. and trans. Yeager, *John Gower* 49 ff.

34. *Cronica Tripertita*, trans. Carlson and Rigg 1.140–43. In this piece of pro-Henrician propaganda, Gower cheerleads retrospectively for the slaughter of Burley (1336–88) among other victims of Richard's enemies in the "Merciless" parliament; for the history, see Saul, *Richard II* 192–95; for comment, see Burke, "'The Voice of One Crying'" 127–28.

35. For sympathetic views on Gower's shift of allegiance from Richard to Henry, see, e.g., Peck, "Politics and Psychology," and Saul "John Gower."

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8

Polarized Debates, Ambivalent Judgments

The *Jugement Behaigne* and the *Confessio Amantis*

LEWIS BEER

In the three sections of this essay, I aim to illustrate three simple points: first, that medieval love-debate poetry is centrally concerned with a conflict between idealism and pragmatism; second, that Machaut's *Jugement du roy de Behaigne* foregrounds this aspect of the love-debate genre and explores its implications; and third, that Gower's *Confessio Amantis* is also structured around the juxtaposition of idealistic and pragmatic views of love. While the two narrative poems may seem to distinguish themselves from earlier love-debates by "settling" the conflict presented with a conclusive judgment, they also retain the fundamental ambivalence of the un-concluded *jeux-partis*.

The primary concern of this essay is the relationship between Machaut's poetry and Gower's, a subject which has received some attention before now, primarily from Gower specialists. For the purposes of this essay, I will pay special attention to the conflicting arguments of R. F. Yeager and Peter Nicholson, and locate my own interpretation in between theirs. In Machaut's poetry, Yeager suggests, Gower would have found "an adumbration of love-as-game, an apparent holiday of passion unfettered by moral responsibilities or spiritual consequences" (92). His French predecessor "would have appeared to present both a life and a poetic tradition fundamentally flawed and antagonistic to all Gower valued, as a poet, as a Christian citizen, and as a man" (104). Yeager sees Gower's poetry (in this case, specifically, the *Cinkante Balades*) as invoking Machaut's "as

quintessentially the kind of writing, expressing the kind of error, which he hoped the alternative example of his own ballades would transform and reclaim" (108). Nicholson, on the other hand, insists that in Machaut's poetry "the virtues demanded by love are identical to those that are demanded by God"; far from aligning himself with the perspective of the *Roman de la rose*, as Yeager argues he does, Machaut "has left both the courtliness of Guillaume de Lorris and the cynicism of Jean de Meun far behind," and so "provided the essential model both for the form and for the ethical purpose of the *Confessio Amantis*" (30).

Unlike Yeager, I argue that Machaut's poetry shows a pained awareness of the unsettling moral implications of erotic love. Gower drives the point home more forcefully, but this is an extension, not a rejection or "correction," of Machaut. Unlike Nicholson, I argue that Machaut insists upon the inevitable disjunction between erotic and Christian morality, precisely through (and not in spite of) his frequent attempts to reconcile the two codes. Again, Gower picks up on this and does something very similar, entertaining the possibility of such a reconciliation but eventually figuring it as impossible. The thirteenth-century *jeux-partis* I examine in the first section of this essay will help to establish an important aspect of the tradition within which Machaut and Gower are working. The central concern of this genre is the perpetual conflict between two views of love: one that sees it as aligned with virtue, and one that sees it as aligned with immoral or amoral carnal desire.

The Playful and Polarized Love-Debate

The tradition of love-debate poetry prior to Machaut is, by now, well-documented, and a survey of the available *jeux-partis*, *tensos*, *partimens* and *demandes d'amour* reveals certain common themes, of which I will discuss two here: the ludic quality of these *jeux* and their tendency to pit idealism against pragmatism. A glance at three representative *jeux-partis* from Arthur Långfors's collection will reveal both these qualities. In this first example, the instigator of the debate announces the topic—whether false or true lovers suffer more—and then says to his partner:

Dites m'en droit,
Sire, tot orendroit

Et si prenez l'un des dous maintenant,
Et j'avrai l'autre partie.

(Tell me the truth about this straight away, sir, and right now take up one side of this question, and I will take up the other.) (4.9–12)[1]

In many of these debates, choosing a side seems as arbitrary as deciding whether to take the black or the white pieces in a game of chess, and the one who initiates the game seems prepared to defend whichever position contradicts that of his opponent, regardless of what he (or she) in fact believes to be "droit."[2] These debates almost invariably descend into abuse and ridicule, as the debaters accuse each other of stupidity, naivety, and ignorance of the ways of love, but the very ferocity of this abuse marks it as playful. Wit and rhetorical skill, rather than sincerity or the soundness of an argument, seem to be prized above all in these exchanges.

However, on a deeper level these debates are concerned with a serious and weighty theme, namely the conflict between pragmatism and idealism—between worldliness and transcendence.[3] Consider the *jeu* in which Jehan Bretel asks which is more fitting conduct for a lover:

Ou qu'il faille
A sa joie recevoir,
Pour paour de percevoir,
Ou qu'il goe en percevance,
Dont sa dame ait mesestance?

(Whether he should abstain from attaining joy, for fear of being seen, or take his pleasure openly, thereby disgracing his lady?) (30.6–10)

Jehan de Grieviler responds that a lover should never do anything

Dont cele se puist doloir
Que vous amez d'amour franche;
L'amour c'est droite vaillance.

(Which might cause sorrow to her whom you love sincerely; love consists in upright virtue.) (18–20)

Bretel retorts derisively that one should always take that for which one is striving:

> Qui le grain voit aparoir
> Et dont n'en prent fors la paille,
> Sa vitaille
> Pert par son povre savoir.
>
> (Whoever sees a grain come forth, and then only takes the chaff, loses his nourishment through ignorance.) (24–27)

Grieviler emphasizes the importance of *amour franche* and *droite vaillance* (that is, "virtue") while Bretel's food metaphor is quintessentially materialistic. The argument is, on the surface, quite a specific one about what counts as good conduct in love, but by any conventional moral standards, the conduct recommended by Bretel would be deemed unambiguously bad. The two poets are really debating whether such conventional moral standards have any place in an erotic love affair, or whether love is simply about sating one's physical desires.

Although it might appear that Bretel comes out of this debate looking unscrupulous and immoral,[4] from his own point of view he is simply being honest about what love involves, while his opponent *fait enfance* ("behaves like an infant") (49), an insult commonly directed at the idealistic disputant in love-debates. The implication is that youthful idealism will inevitably be replaced by a more pragmatic conception of love as one gains in experience, a perspective voiced by Bretel again when a young man asks him whether he should make advances to a friend's lady, left in his care: "Garde la bien et soies avisez" ("guard her well and be discreet"; 95.–13), says Bretel ambiguously, before admitting to his opponent that, since he is his *ainsnez* ("elder"; 14), he would not refrain from trying to seduce the woman in question. He explains, "Trop est joenne couart et poi senez / Qui ne s'aïde entreuz qu'il est en vie" ("he is a young and unlearned coward who will not look out for himself while he is alive"; 47–48). Courtly lovers—not least those found in the works of Machaut and Gower—often complain that unscrupulous people get everything they want, while they, who have always behaved honorably, are left out in the cold. This is always a lesson learned through experience, and it amounts to a realization that the lover's fate is determined by Fortune: whether one attains one's desires or not depends on worldly circumstance. It is only by being pragmatic and taking advantage of opportunities—seizing

the grain when it appears, seducing the woman entrusted to you—that a lover can hope to improve his chances of success.

Clearly, the pleasure to be derived from these literary performances consists not only in the rhetorical skill on display but also in the debate generated among their listeners. The third party stands for all of these: he (or she) and the other audience members (or readers) are asked to decide which position they sympathize with, the idealistic or the pragmatic one.

The love-debate's success as a social ice-breaker depends on its formulation of a suitably controversial moral dilemma, one which will provide the necessary *frisson* to spark an argument. The ludic and moral elements in the medieval love-debate are simultaneously interdependent and in conflict. On the one hand, as Emma Cayley argues, this "collaborative poetic game . . . like the game of love, is played in a constant state of desire for continuation rather than completion; the end of the game (closure) is often deliberately deferred in order to perpetuate the game, and further poetic exchange solicited from within the text" (*Debate and Dialogue* 12). On the other hand, what is solicited from within the text may not be further poetic exchange as such, but something that is beyond the text and that marks the text's limits, in this case by resolving the debate.

In short, there are two different ways of interpreting the moral dimension of these debates. We might see the game as having a didactic function, in which the unscrupulous pragmatist is given a voice only to be exposed as corrupt by the third party's judgment. Alternatively, we might see the game in a more subversive light, as a celebration of the carnal, pragmatic perspective and a defiance of oppressive moral codes.[5] In the first model, the game engineers its own demise: the play between competing viewpoints seems to engender debate, but the conclusion is heavily implied (and indeed requested) by the terms of that debate. What self-respecting third party would dare to judge in favor of the unscrupulous seducer, without at least specifying that this judgment constituted a larger verdict on the fundamental immorality of erotic love? In the second model, the game exists primarily to give voice to the pragmatic viewpoint: conclusive judgments are eschewed in favor of perpetual debate and play. The appeal to a third party becomes a kind of ruse, in that it ostensibly legitimates the debate by submitting it to a higher authority, while in effect liberating that debate from an actual judgment. By asking

its audience to provide the concluding judgment, the love-debate both edifies that audience with a lesson on moral choice and highlights its own refusal to approve or reprove either of the perspectives it has just rehearsed. Although a central claim of this essay is that Machaut and Gower do not leave things so open-ended in their love poems, to some extent we will find these same ambiguities at work in the *Jugement du roy de Behaigne* and the *Confessio Amantis*.

The *Jugement du roy de Behaigne*

In this extended love-debate, a bereaved lady and a betrayed knight argue over which of them suffers more. Having overheard their discussion, the poem's narrator takes them to the King of Bohemia's court. The king, in his role as arbitrator, ultimately decides that the betrayed knight should win the argument, and this decision is supported by his counselors. They all agree that the knight suffers more, but disagree vehemently over whether he should remain devoted to his faithless beloved. As R. Barton Palmer phrases it, "the original question—who suffers more?—is turned toward a deeper, underlying issue: the possibility of reconciling emotional release, represented by the abstraction Youth, to understanding, represented by the character Reason" ("Metafictional Machaut" 33). If the average *jeu-parti* is more concerned with wit and rhetoric than with the actual topic at hand, the debate at Bohemia's court seems to veer in the other direction: the ostensible dispute is resolved quickly and without controversy, but from it grows a new dispute about the deeper implications of the knight's predicament.[6]

In the knight's own account of his affair, it becomes apparent that his love is grounded in sensuality and carnality. He is fixated only on his lady's body, not on her character: "onques encor en ma vie ne vi / Corps de dame si tres bien assouvi" ("never in my life have I seen a woman's body more beautifully formed"; *Behaigne* 405–06).[7] When the bereaved woman describes *her* lover, she focuses on the man's virtues rather than on his appearance. This contrast will prove more and more significant as the poem develops.

Reflecting on the faithlessness of his superficially beautiful lady, the knight searches for someone to blame, and considers various possible

culprits. Having reluctantly exonerated Fortune, Love and the lady herself, he says boldly that:

> Nature et Dieus firent grant ignorance,
> Sauve l'onneur d'eulz et leur reverence,
> Quant il firent si tres belle semblance
> Sanz loyauté

> (Nature and God made a great blunder, with all respect to their honor and reverence, when they fashioned such a beautiful semblance without loyalty.) (809–12)

This seems to indicate a comically willful moral blindness on the part of the knight.[8]

Shortly after this, however, he goes on to reveal a very clear-sighted appreciation of his lady's insubstantiality:

> Car s'elle eüst .c. fois mains de beauté,
> Et elle fust loyaulz, la grant bonté
> De Loyauté l'eüst plus honnouré
> Que s'elle fust
> c.m. fois plus belle, et mieux pleüst;
> Et en tous cas trop mieux plaire deüst,
> Pour ce qu'en li riens a dire n'eüst.

> (For had she a hundred times less beauty, yet remained loyal, that great gift of loyalty would have brought her more honor and been more pleasing than if she had been a hundred thousand times more beautiful. At any rate, she must have pleased more, for then there would have been nothing with which to reproach her.) (813–19)

The wording of the last line quoted is very telling: if the lady were good, "en li riens a dire n'eüst." Literally, this means that there would be nothing (that is, nothing bad) to say about her, but the verb *dire* is also associated with the composition of poetry. It is no coincidence that the *Jugement Behaigne* devotes far more space to the betrayed knight's story than to that of the grieving woman. As far as her love affair is concerned, this lady has no story to tell, nothing to talk about, since her lover was virtuous and their affair came to a natural end. The knight wins the competition this time

not only because he suffers more but also because he provides the poem with its substance.

During his argument with the bereaved lady, the knight grants that he might be able to win his beloved back by continuing to serve her loyally. However, this would not secure lasting happiness, because his lady has proven that she cannot be trusted. Having played the game and lost, the knight finds that:

> . . . par ce point
> En mon desir d'esperance n'a point,
> Mais a li joint desespoir si a point
> Que j'en serai matez en l'angle point
> Du Souvenir.
>
> (For this reason there is no hope in my desire; rather, despair is so rooted there that I shall lie vanquished in the blind alley of Memory.) (1004–08)

The first two lines contain a brilliant pun: the knight says there is no "esperance" in his "desir," but instead "joint" to the latter is "desespoir," which is "desir" with "espoir" inserted into it; that is, rather than his desire engendering hope, it swallows it up and converts it into despair.[9] The word "joint" in the third line quoted throws into relief the four rhyming "points," which vividly drive home the knight's contention that, far from being consoled, he is stung by the four-headed "point" of desire, hope, despair and memory. The crucial point to highlight here is that even the knight's hope of future success is really a kind of despair, because he knows that any such success would be temporary at best.

When the poem's narrator, having emerged from his hiding place to suggest an arbitrator, describes the two lovers, his description of the knight is brief and largely indicative of a handsome and well-schooled courtier rather than a really good man. However, whereas the knight's story takes up the bulk of this poem, and hardly any attention is paid to the lady's, at this point the description of her is considerably longer, more detailed, and more complimentary than that of the knight. The narrator begins, "Et la dame ou Nature volt entendre, / Si c'on ne puet sa grant beauté comprendre" ("and the lady, upon whom Nature used her greatest

art, so that her beauty surpassed all comprehension"; 1230–31), reminding us of the knight's claim that Nature (as well as God) was at fault for not having endowed his lady with loyalty as well as beauty. The reminder is important, because after a long and detailed description of this lady's physical attributes, the narrator says she was also:

> Sage, loyal, courtoise, et de cuer franche,
> Et si parfaite en toute contenance
> Qu'en loyauté
> Estoit assez plus belle que beauté;
> N'en li n'avoit orgueil ne cruauté,
> Ne rien qui fust contraire a amisté.
>
> (Wise, faithful, courteous, and open-hearted, and so perfect in every aspect that she was more beautiful in bearing constancy than beauty itself. In her there was no haughtiness, no cruelty, nor anything contrary to love.) (1246–51)

Virtue here is defined primarily in terms of "loyauté," translated as "constancy" by Wimsatt and Kibler: this was the quality lacking in the betrayed knight's lover, and this is apparently the quality that makes the bereaved woman so admirable, and indeed beautiful.

However, before we even get to the King of Bohemia's court, we may notice a problem with this idea. If virtue consists in loyalty, is each disputant morally obligated to persist in loving their respectively deceased and unfaithful partner? When all of Bohemia's counselors agree that the knight suffers more than the lady, they concur with the reasoning behind this judgment, namely that the death of the lady's lover will necessarily place a limit upon her grief. As Reason says:

> Amours n'a pas tant de pooir en li
> Que soustenir se peüst sanz ami
> L'eure d'un jour, ne sanz amie aussi.
> Et se l'un faut
> Des .iii., les .ii. autres aront deffaut.
>
> (Love is not powerful enough to sustain itself a single hour without a lover or lady. And if one of these three is missing, the other two are incomplete.) (1689–93)

Effectively, Reason is explaining both why the lady will get over her pain in time, and why this poem has paid so little attention to her: she is beyond the reach of love and beyond the interest of love poetry, both of which operate within the realm of ephemeral, material things. With both her actual beloved and all hope of seeing him definitively gone, this woman must now cease to love the former object of her affection and find consolation either in a new lover or in God (Machaut's poem only mentions the latter course). This woman's loyalty is her best quality, but due to the fact of mortality she cannot help but cease to be loyal.

Reason persists in expanding on her austere lesson, in one of the most crucial passages in the poem, which I will quote here at some length. Note the interplay, in this clinically reasonable definition of love, between the soul and the body:

> Car c'est tres bon de faire son devoir,
> Si que l'ame s'en puist apparcevoir;
> Mais il n'est dame
> Në homs vivant qui aime si sanz blame,
> S'il est tapez de l'amoureuse flame,
> Qu'il n'aime mieux assez le corps que l'ame.
> Pour quel raison?
> Amours vient de charnel affection,
> Et si desir et sa condiction
> Sont tout enclin a delectation.
> Si ne se puet
> Nulz ne nulle garder qui amer voelt
> Qu'il n'y ait vice ou pechié; il l'estuet;
> Et c'est contraire a l'ame qui s'en duelt.

> (For it is well and good to do one's duty, so that the soul can perceive it, but there is no woman or man alive whose love is so blameless, if he is caught by the amorous flame, who does not love the body much better than the soul. Why is this? Because Love comes from carnal affection, and its desires and essence all incline to pleasure. No man or woman who wishes to love can avoid all sin and impropriety; it cannot be otherwise; and it is contrary to the soul which sorrows over it.) (1702–15)

Earlier in the poem, Machaut emphasized the contrast between the physical, so to speak "body-centred," love of the knight, and that of the lady, who seemed to have selected a partner more on the basis of his virtue, though it was also said that "nul meilleur ne nul plus bel ne fu" ("no better or more handsome knight ever lived"; 1639), so we are in no doubt that physical attraction played its part in her affair too. The dominance of this form of attraction, even in the most virtuous love, is here asserted by Reason, and because love is "charnel," concerned largely with the "corps" and "enclin a delectation," it necessarily involves one in "vice et pechié."

When Reason, before condemning love as earthly and sinful, qualifies what is to come by saying, "c'est tres bon de faire son devoir, / Si que l'ame s'en puist apparcevoir," she is making a wry comment on the idealists' concern for virtue, though approving of it at the same time. One should behave virtuously, she says, in order that "l'ame s'en puist apparcevoir," as though to suggest that the soul does nothing but stand by and observe, like a stern super ego figure, as the carnal part of us goes about its business. Reason's next claim throws some light on her meaning: "Et d'autre part, / Tout aussi com l'ame se depart / Du corps, l'amour s'en esloigne et espart" ("furthermore, as soon as the soul leaves the body, love withdraws and sets off"; 1716–18). The body disintegrates without the soul, and love disintegrates without the body. Love is something the body engages in, watched over, sorrowed over, but tolerated by the soul, which awaits the moment of its liberation in death. The inevitability of death, and of its impact upon love, is not contested by anyone in this poem (although it is contested in the *Navarre*).

The King of Bohemia ultimately judges that "cilz amans est plus loing de confort / Que la dame ne soit, que Dieux confort" ("this lover is farther from consolation than this lady, whom God consoles"; 1934–35). The bereaved woman has testified to her late lover's virtue and honor: her affair ended because of an inevitable natural process, one which has exposed the dependence of love upon "charnel affection." The lady will get over her lover's death because his bodily existence is now over. For this reason, and because their affair was founded partly on virtue, she can now turn to God for consolation. The knight, however, has fallen for a beautiful exterior, so that even when his beloved turns out to be rotten on the inside, he cannot fall out of love with her. This is why he is further

from consolation and further from God. As the knight says, the bereaved woman's lover is now in Heaven (1582–83): the transience that destroys her love (mortality) also directs her thoughts toward God, and toward the consolations of religion. The knight, however, has fallen victim to a different kind of transience, namely the moral transience of a love that, unlike the lady's, has nothing to do with virtue and everything to do with the body, hence Reason's condemnation of it (1724–39). The fickleness of the mortal human body is a reminder of our carnal imperfection, but in being confronted with it the lady is left open to the "confort" of God; the fickleness signified by the knight's carnality and his lover's infidelity leaves him fixated on the body and mired in sin.

The King of Bohemia, endorsing Reason's point of view, advises both the knight and the lady to overcome their pain and their loss of time and to move on with their lives. However, the poem encompasses more than just this austere point of view. Another counselor, Love, points out that "en mon service en a encor .c. mil / Qui aiment tuit prez aussi fort com il, / Et si n'en ont la monte d'un fuisil" ("there are in my service a hundred thousand more who love as deeply as he without a straw to show for it"; 1805–07); no truly good lover should balk at such hardship. Youth insists that even if the knight does suffer from worse misfortunes than the bereaved lady, "Fort est assez; bien les porte et soustient" ("he is strong enough to bear and endure them well"; 1891). Youth cannot do otherwise than extol this mindlessly positive view of love, as the King of Bohemia recognizes:

> onques mains pour ce ne l'en prisa,
> Qu'elle faisoit
> Tout son devoir de ce qu'elle disoit,
> Et de son voeil plus chier denree avoit
> Que .x. livres de son proffit n'avoit.
>
> (He did not esteem her any the less for this, because she spoke only as she ought; he placed more value in a pennyworth of her opinion than in ten pounds of profit.) (1895–99)

Youth's persistence in maintaining the knight's affections is to be commended, for it is part of a natural process, and in some sense Youth and Love seem to have a value independent of the more "profitable"

counselors, Reason and Loyalty. Such is the reading suggested by Wimsatt and Kibler's translation, and by Palmer's, but as Jane Gilbert pointed out to me (at the 2010 ICMS in Kalamazoo), lines 1898–99 may be taken to mean "and she [Youth] valued a pennyworth of her own will [or opinion] more than ten pounds of profit"; that is, Youth would have her say, and her will, at any cost.

Even if we accept this more critical reading of Youth, it is clear that her opinion has some value, though the king immediately asks her to moderate it. Youth is only doing her "devoir" by speaking as she does, and as Reason has just been saying, "c'est tres bon de faire son devoir." The repetition of this phrase suggests the conflicting imperatives at the heart of love-debate poetry: we are obligated by nature to be sensual and impetuous, especially in our youth, just as we are obligated by the demands of reason and morality to moderate these natural tendencies, especially as we grow older.

At the end of the poem, the narrator himself turns out to be in love with a woman who does not reciprocate his feelings, but in accordance with the advice of Love and Youth he rejoices in this sweet, refined suffering. I quote the last two sentences in full:

> Et nonpourquant ja pour ce ne sera
> Que je ne soie
> Loyaus amis, jolis, et plains de joie;
> Car se rien plus en ce monde n'avoie
> Fors ce que j'aim ma dame simple et coie
> Contre son gré,
> Si ai je assez, qu'Amours m'a honnouré
> Et richement mon mal guerredonné,
> Quant a ma dame ainsi mon cuer donné
> Ai a tous jours.
> Et ce mon cuer conforte en ses dolours
> Que, quant premiers senti les maulz d'Amours,
> A gentil mal cuidë humble secours.

> (Despite this I will not be any less a faithful, happy, joy-filled lover, for had I nothing in this world more than the fact that I love my innocent and lovely lady against her inclination, yet do I have enough, for Love has honored me and richly rewarded my pain, since thus I

> have given my heart to my lady forever. And this consoles my heart in its tribulations that, when first I felt Love's sorrows, I hoped for humble relief for my sweet sorrow.) (2067–79)

For Machaut, throughout his ouevre, being a lover means writing love poetry, in order to do which, as he would later write in his *Prologue*, one must be of a cheerful disposition, hence the promise here to be "jolis, et plains de joie." This phrase invites comparison between the narrator and Youth, and indeed his reference to the time "quant premiers senti les maulz d'Amours" suggests that he is recalling and writing about a time when he was a young man. Youth's optimism is—by definition, as it were—not going to last for very long, and must be seen as a symptom of the inevitable (and less censurable for that) egotism and thoughtlessness that only dissipate with increased age and wisdom.

One effect of this ending is that, as in the *jeux-partis* discussed in the first part of this essay, there is both a gesture toward and an eschewal of a decisive moral judgment. In the poem, the moral judgment is articulated by Reason, seconded by Loyalty, and then ratified by the King of Bohemia. However, this judgment is disturbingly ambivalent. On the one hand, the text seems to state decisively that love is grounded in "charnel affection," and therefore essentially sinful: the knight's victory in the field of *fin' amor* is a failure in the field of moral conduct. On the other hand, Reason herself stands up for the more idealistic view of love when she affirms the importance of moral conduct, the arguments of Love and Youth are said to have their own value alongside those of Reason and Loyalty, and after the austere judgment has been given the final word goes to the poem's youthful narrator, who remains happily absorbed in his amorous pursuits. This lover is idealistic to the extent that he intends to remain a "loyaus amis" and professes himself content with "humble secours"; but this idealism is haunted by the pragmatism of Reason's earlier speech, so that terms like "joie" and "en ce monde," as well as the numerous references to the "maulz" and "dolours" the lover suffers in his "cuer," suggest that the narrator's love is not as free of "charnel affection" and painful transience as he would like to pretend.

There is a genuine ambivalence about this ending, but Peter Nicholson attempts to resolve it by finding in Machaut:

> a full exposition of the moral *tertium quid*, the alternative both to the embrace of carnality and to the transcendence of human love that lies in the acceptance of love and the demand for virtuous practice. This is the most fundamental assumption that Gower inherits from Machaut: that love is neither a sin in itself nor exempt from moral restraint but a site of moral choices, and therefore an area in which ethical guidance is not only appropriate but necessary. (37)

The problematic element here is the suggestion that love is not "a sin in itself," which contradicts Reason's claim that "Amour vient de charnel affection." Nicholson dismisses this passage: he says that "only Loiauté" agrees that the knight should forget his lady, and it is "far from clear that Raison and Loiauté are meant to have the final word"; the poem as a whole is "very far from a dismissal of [the knight's] love" (19). Later, Nicholson claims that "[t]he only character who affirms a link between love and sin in Machaut is Raison, in *Behaigne*" (25). As a rule, Machaut pictures the sinfully desiring lover as shifting toward "the condition of patience, hopefulness and trust that is demanded [in the *Behaigne*] by Amours" (20).[10]

Nicholson does not mention the fact that the King of Bohemia himself explicitly agrees with Reason's verdict on the knight's love. Indeed, the king pleads with Youth to let the knight benefit from the "Bon et loial" ("good and faithful"; 1911) counsel he has received from Reason and Loyalty. It is perplexing that Nicholson says "only Loiauté" agrees with Reason, not only because this is not true but also because such a cursory dismissal of this counselor conflicts with Nicholson's own formulation of the "*tertium quid*" that Machaut presents as the ideal of human love: a love based on "the requirements of *loyauté* and *celers*, the silent and faithful service that Love demands" (21). Machaut could have shown Loyalty insisting on the need for continued fidelity even to an unfaithful lover, and this is what Reason expects from her fellow counselor (1735, 1744–45). Instead, Loyalty demands that the knight abandon this fruitless infatuation (1824–46), before concluding, with reference to the original topic of the debate, that "cils a droit, et ceste dame a tort" ("he is right and that lady, wrong"; 1847). Nicholson cites the knight's victory in the debate as one of the reasons why we should not see the conclusion of the poem as a "dismissal" of his love (19), but Loyalty's ambiguous verdict states that the

knight is technically correct in claiming to suffer more, because he will continue to love his lady. In the long passage leading up to this verdict, Loyalty has already signaled that she sees the knight as morally "in the wrong" for the exact same reason. His love is a sin, and his seeming fidelity disloyal insofar as it contradicts the requirements of Loyalty herself.

Reason's skeptical take on love is given far more authority, in the text of the poem, than Nicholson suggests, but he is nonetheless correct that various factors work against what Reason is saying. Cayley, referring to the "aesthetic of non-ending of the debate poem in late medieval France," cites the King of Bohemia's modest denial of his own powers of judgment (1936–40) as a "call for continuation" that would later be answered by the *Jugement Navarre* ("Machaut and Debate Poetry" 112–13).[11] Alongside the authoritative voices calling for an end to the debate, to the knight's love, and by implication to the poetry generated from this debate and this love, there are several powerful voices calling for (and being granted) a continuation of all these things. Both perspectives play an integral role throughout Machaut's poetry: Love and Youth persist in spite of challenges from Reason, the infidelity of the beloved, moral or religious codes, and even old age itself—however forcefully those challenges are articulated.

There is some truth in Yeager's observation that "Machaut's *poète* . . . is a servant of Amour first and always" who, unlike Gower's Amans, never repents of his irrational love, even in old age (103–04). However, even if Machaut does not offer an extended moralizing satire on foolish lovers, it would be a mistake to gloss over the searing critiques of erotic love that are woven into his poems.[12] These poems are by turns idealistic and pragmatic, at one moment seeing love as a transcendent, quasi-religious experience conducive to honor and virtue, at another moment seeing love as a degraded and degrading pursuit of carnal pleasures. Both debates in the *Behaigne* are settled, in the sense that the most authoritative judges pronounce the knight more unhappy and his love foolish. They are also left un-settled, in the sense that Love, Youth, and the narrator resist the final judgments, and more important in the sense that we do not know what will become of the two disputants once the poem is over. At the end of Machaut's poems, his protagonists still have the rest of their lives to live, and we leave them as they proceed into an uncertain future. This is less true of the *Confessio Amantis*.

The *Confessio Amantis*

Although Gower offers a more definitive critique of love in the *Confessio* than Machaut had done in the *Behaigne*, he also re-works many of the key features of Machaut's critique: he considers and debates whether love is conducive to virtuous conduct or not; he balances the notion that lovers should foster virtue against the notion that love is inescapably sinful; and in spite of the rather severe conclusions he arrives at on this subject, he also attests to (and, in a sense, celebrates) the natural human tendency to persist in loving despite the prohibitions of reason.

For most of the *Confessio*'s length, it is taken for granted that true love demands, and thrives upon, virtuous conduct. Amans confesses his sins to Genius, presumably in the hope that he might thereby win the grace of Venus and of his lady (Olsson 47), and at times Genius seems to encourage him in this belief by affirming that virtuous conduct will garner amorous success. "[I]f thou wolt in grace stond / With love, thou most leve Envie" (2.203–04),[13] he tells the eager lover at one point, and in Books 4 and 6 he will encourage Amans to emulate Pygmalion and Bacchus respectively by praying for grace. In the course of this 30,000-line shrift, however, it gradually transpires that Amans has not committed any noteworthy sins—and certainly none that would disqualify him as a deserving recipient of his lady's affection.

The confession over, Genius advises Amans to abandon love for a more stable pursuit, and his advice has strong echoes of that dispensed by Reason in the *Behaigne*:

> Tak love where it mai noght faile.
> For as of this which thou art inne,
> Be that thou seist it is a sinne,
> And sinne mai no pris deserve
> . . . . . .
> And sett thou myhtest lust atteigne,
> Of every lust th'ende is a peine,
> And every peine is good to fle;
> So it is wonder thing to se,
> Why such a thing schal be desired. (8.2086–99)

Amans's love is a sin, not because of the way he has gone about loving this woman, but simply because "Of every lust th'ende is a peine." This bleak statement recalls not only Reason's description of "charnel" love but also the central dispute in the *Behaigne*. The knight suffered more because he was more inextricably in love than the lady, but by the same token he was also further from consolation and more deeply mired in sin. The knight imagined what it might be like to attain his lady's favor again, but recognized that this would only result in more pain. Genius, too, imagines this hypothetical success ("sett thou myhtest lust atteigne") and observes that it would garner only sorrow, but not, in this case, because the woman in question is immoral. The issue foregrounded here is the more fundamental one, also explored by Machaut, of erotic love's inherent carnality and transience.

Like the knight in the *Behaigne*, Amans is advised to "set thin herte under that lawe, / The which of reson is governed / And noght of will" (8.2134–35), but like the lover in the *Roman de la rose* listening to Reason, Amans hears and comprehends this advice, but cannot act upon it:

> Mi resoun understod him wel,
> And knew it was soth everydel
> That he hath seid, bot noght forthi
> Mi will hath nothing set therby. (2191–94)

Genius has advised him to be governed by his reason rather than his will, but the latter proves stronger. The conflict we see here echoes the one in Book 3, when Amans describes an extended "contek" in himself between Wit and Reason on one side and Will and Hope on the other. Like Machaut's betrayed knight, Amans often regrets his vain pursuit of this unattainable woman, and senses that he is wasting his time. Reason and Wit tell him to quench his desires, but Will exhorts him to maintain Hope, and also warns that "where an herte sit / Al hol governed upon Wit, / He hath this lyves lust forlore" (3.1184–86). Nicholson claims that this conflict is "more emotional than moral in nature" and that "Reason does not require leaving off love because it is sinful, nor do Will and Hope imply anything more than continuing to love without reward" (197). However, by standing up for "this lyves lust," Will and Hope align themselves with those lusts of which the end is, according to Genius, "a peine," and implicitly oppose any notion of happiness beyond this life.

It is thus not quite true to say, as Nicholson does, that Genius's climactic condemnation of love is "simply a dismissal of everything that precedes" (382), because it alludes to a debate over the moral status of love that has been rehearsed at various points throughout the poem. In the "contek" passage, Genius himself affirms that the conflict Amans describes has moral implications when he tells him:

> Thou dost, my sone, agein the riht;
> Bot love is of so gret a miht,
> His lawe mai no man refuse,
> So miht thou thee the betre excuse. (3.1192–95)

This, too, anticipates Amans's objections to Genius at the climax of the poem, when he claims to be helpless in the face of love's power. The passage just quoted encapsulates the ambivalence we saw earlier in the *Behaigne*: even once it has been definitively established that love is essentially sinful, and that the best course of action is to renounce it, "loves lawe" is still impossible (or nearly impossible) to resist. Like the bereaved lady forced to become disloyal after her lover's death, we are all incapable of avoiding the taint of sin that accompanies erotic love.

Venus's injunction—Amans's final verbal warning—to "Remembre wel hou thou art old" (8.2439) also has little positive effect upon the aged lover, so she anoints his eyes with a healing salve and then shows him a mirror, in which he perceives his physical age: "My will was tho to se nomore / Outwith, for ther was no pleasance" (2832–33), he says. Reflecting on the image, he "made a liknesse of miselve / Unto the sondri Monthes twelve" (2837–38), seeing how the ebb and flow of worldly cares has afflicted his own body. Then, "whan Resoun it herde sein / That loves rage was aweie, / He cam to me the rihte weie" (2862–64), and at this point Amans finds that he has forgotten what love is. "So goth the fortune of my whiel," laughs Venus, "Forthi mi conseil is thou leve" (2880–81). Amans obeys her command, making his way "Homward a softe pas" (2967), thinking "only that y hadde lore / My time, and was sori ther fore" (2953–54).

Morally speaking, to judge from his extended shrift, there is nothing very wrong with Amans, so if "love virtues" are the same as Christian virtues, he ought to enjoy success at the end of the poem. Amans's desolation is a consequence of his physical, rather than moral, failings. His lack

of virility is enough to disqualify him, proving definitively that virtue—in the sense of moral goodness—plays no integral role in a love affair. Despite his apparent idealism for the majority of the text, Gower turns out to be one of the pragmatists. A good lover, he suggests, is young, strong and, most important, unscrupulous enough not to let himself grow old and wise before seizing his opportunity, which is effectively what Amans has done.

In fact, despite his hope that his virtues might win him grace, Amans has on several occasions voiced an impatience with the demanding moral code he is trying to follow and a suspicion that he would "spede" much better if only he cast aside his scruples. When Genius is shriving him of sloth, Amans remarks sardonically:

> Mi grace comth so selde aboute,
> That is the Slowthe of which I doute
> Mor than of al the remenant
> Which is to love appourtenant. (4.61–64)

For Amans, the only thing guilty of sloth is his long-awaited reward. However much he may seem to buy into the notion that good conduct will further his cause, Amans keeps coming back to his undeniable lack of erotic success. His attempts to cultivate virtue and stamp out vice may win him credit with God, but they mean little or nothing to Venus, or to the object of Amans's affections.

It is, however, understandable that readers balk at the austerity of this reading, and Nicholson is far from alone in wanting to rescue erotic love from killjoys like Reason and Genius. Discussing the poem's ending, J. Allan Mitchell argues that "Amans's rather mysterious end is one among a set of possibilities . . . furnishing probable rather than necessary truth. Why indeed should the poem have ended the way it did? . . . [O]ther outcomes are imaginable even for the aged and infatuated lover" (50). One might object that Amans's end is absolutely inevitable and not all that mysterious, as it is one that everyone must ultimately face. Amans's problem is not old age as such, but the approach of mortality—that force which (as all four counselors in the *Behaigne* would agree) necessarily quenches erotic love, if it has not been quenched during life. But when critics plaintively resist the *Confessio*'s definitive final judgment on love, they are only echoing the response of Amans himself. Knowing that

things must turn out a certain way does not prevent us from protesting, or from toying with other, "imaginable" outcomes.

Gower, like Machaut, offers the inevitable moral conclusion on love, but also acknowledges the appeal of the un-arbitrated *jeu-parti* that allows us to believe that the debate—along with love, poetry, and the imaginative realm in which these things operate—can go on perpetually. What is at issue here is nothing less than the appeal of "this lyves lust." Machaut and Gower invest sympathetically in the idea that such worldly pleasures can be idealized and given enduring value, and the energy and persistence of this fantasy constitute a significant part of these poems' appeal. It is a fantasy, nonetheless, because both poets also figure the attempt to align love with virtue as essentially futile. Both the *Behainge* and the *Confessio* make this stark point clearly and conclusively: earthly love, they say, simply *is* carnal and sinful, and therefore can never be an adequate substitute for, or (on its own) a sufficient means of attaining, any form of salvation. We cannot resist it during life any more than we can refrain entirely from sin, and as such it is as well to try and orient it toward virtue—to do our "devoir" in both senses—but love will have to be renounced in the end, if only at the moment of death. The tension between this fact of existence and the natural human tendency to resist it is what animates the poetry of Machaut and Gower, but there is no doubt as to which side of the debate will ultimately prevail.

Notes

1. The number of the *jeu-parti*, as given in Långfors's edition is indicated in parenthesis after the quotation, followed by line numbers. All translations are mine.

2. As Cayley notes, "the *jeu-parti* is characterised by the subjectivity of the interlocutors, who frequently become personally involved in their contest, each more concerned to discredit the other's arguments than with the topic itself" (*Debate and Dialogue* 35). This point feeds into Cayley's emphasis on the deferral of closure in medieval debate poetry; however, Remy's discussion of the term "jeu-parti" and its relation to chess problems suggests that the phrase often refers to a conflict demanding resolution.

3. See Gally 64–68 on the intrusion of pragmatic, proverbial wisdom into the idealized courtly imagery of the *jeux-partis*; see also Tyssens 383 and Doss-Quinby 508, 511 for their comments on the interplay between courtly and pragmatic viewpoints in love-debates between men and women.

4. Bretel sometimes defends the opposite point of view, and is patronized by Grieviler in similar terms to the ones he (Bretel) uses here: see, for example, number 47.

5. The medieval and modern debates over the moral status of the *Roman de la rose* are obviously relevant here.

6. Cf. Cayley's discussion of the opposition between words and things, or dialectic and rhetoric, with reference to Chartier's *Dialogus familiaris amici et sodalis* (*Debate and Dialogue*, chap. 3).

7. Text and translation are quoted from Wimsatt and Kibler's edition, though I have also consulted Palmer's.

8. See Wimsatt's *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries* (122) for a contrasting view.

9. In the light of my comments in the previous paragraph, I would not quite agree with Leach's claim that "[the knight's] poverty of Hope is a despair that silences poetry and song" (169).

10. Nicholson is here building on the ideas of Douglas Kelly and Sylvia Huot.

11. See also Palmer's argument that Machaut's ouevre, and the *Jugement* poems in particular, are "a never-ending struggle over the generation of meaning" ("Transtextuality" 299).

12. See Heinrichs's "Lovers' Consolations of Philosophy" and *The Myths of Love* for a limited but sometimes persuasive, and rather neglected, "Robertsonian" approach to Machaut.

13. All quotations are taken from Peck's edition of the *Confessio Amantis* and are cited by book and line number.

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III

LASTING INFLUENCE

9

Proust and the Amorous Fountain

Secret Architecture or Suppressed Source?

CAMILLE NAISH

A book is a vast cemetery where most of the names
on tombstones have become indecipherable.

Marcel Proust

Early in *Sodom and Gomorrah* a curious scene unfolds in which a "famous fountain"[1] purportedly designed by Hubert Robert unceremoniously drenches a snobbish minor aristocrat, sexually humiliating her before a brilliant assembled company. The scene is sufficiently peculiar to have attracted the attention of many critics; but so far, no one has suggested a connection between Marcel Proust's "amorous" fountain and Machaut's "*The Fountain of Love,*" a complete edition of which appeared in Paris just as Proust was beginning work on *In Search of Time Lost.* I suggest that Proust was intrigued by Machaut's title, literalized it—and then occluded the association, for a complex set of reasons involving his acute awareness of anti-Semitism and guilt at his own addiction to onanism. Before considering possible connections with Machaut, however, we must first revisit the strange scene in *Sodom and Gomorrah.*

Remarkable not only for the crudely humorous wetting of Mme d'Arpajon but also for the virtuosic description of the willful waterspout itself, the "fountain" sequence occurs at a reception given by the Prince and Princesse de Guermantes. Of crucial importance in the narrative, this prestigious reception represents the highest point in the meteoric social

rise of Proust's naive narrator, a precociously intelligent but seemingly inept young bourgeois tormented by the thought that he has not really been invited to this glittering event. Set in the historical context of the Dreyfus affair—an issue that constitutes a litmus test of political opinion throughout *In Search of Time Lost*[2] and marks a fault line in the various upper strata of society depicted—the "fountain" sequence has elicited much critical comment; yet even the most thorough analyses seem to raise almost as many significant questions as they resolve.

Before revisiting three of the more rigorous analyses, let us recall the mini-narrative that frames the odd episode of Hubert Robert's "fountain." All events narrated in *Sodom* are told through a double perspective: that of an older, disenchanted narrator who is recalling and also recounting from some unspecified point in time the worldly ascension of his youthful, naively perceiving self—a dual point of view that frequently enhances comic effect. The young narrator's fear of not having been invited is immediately dispelled on arrival, when he is warmly greeted by the princess. But protocol now dictates that he be introduced to his host, the august prince, somewhere in the gardens. Who, among the assorted aristocrats and hangers-on, will be kind or brave enough to present him? Though clearly a man of culture and intellect, the narrator is in terms of pedigree uninteresting. No one is willing to risk precious social capital by hazarding the direct introduction he requests. Mme d'Arpajon pretends not to have heard; Mme de Souvré takes him by the shoulders and pushes him vaguely toward the prince.

Finally, the narrator succeeds in being introduced. Despite a manifest *hauteur* the prince impresses the young man with his genuine courtesy and simplicity, which the narrator finds superior to the forced amiability of the prince's cousin, the Duc de Guermantes. The narrator is tactful enough to move on quickly, leaving the prince to other guests. These include an old friend Charles Swann, who is elegant, wealthy, pro-Dreyfus, Jewish—and the husband of an un-presentable ex-courtesan, Odette. The courteous prince astounds the narrator by scooping up Swann with the force of a suction pump and dragging him off to the bottom of the garden—the better, some onlookers report, to eject him.

Now hopelessly distracted, the narrator does not even realize—until he later reads a newspaper account—that a Czech orchestra has been playing and that the entire event has been punctuated by the explosions

of fireworks. He recovers his wits a little at the thought of going to see "Hubert Robert's famous fountain," which is described in detail: it is the obvious pièce de résistance of the Guermantes garden. A drawback of this masterpiece is that sudden gusts of wind can cause it to behave unpredictably and wet someone—the fate of poor Mme d'Arpajon. Until recently the mistress of the Duc de Guermantes, she has been supplanted by a younger and more gorgeous rival, Mme Surgis-le-duc. Wrongly informed that the duke is in the colonnades by the fountain with his new, hilariously named lover, Mme d'Arpajon sets off in pursuit and is publicly soaked to the skin by a wayward spurt—a humiliation comical enough to prompt wild guffaws from a delighted onlooker, the nearby Grand-Duke Wladimir.

At first sight the passage appears simple enough: an example of schoolboy humor on the part of the narrator, one might think—lavatory humor, with crudely sexual overtones. But the operations of the fountain scene are more complex than they first appear. Thomas Baldwin points to a number of problems posed by its description. Initially the fountain is depicted as if existing on a flat surface, in terms best suited to a painting: "Seen from a distance it looked slender, motionless and hard, allowing the breeze to disturb only as it fell a lighter spray of droplets from the pale and quivering plume"[3]—not inappropriate, if Proust himself was thinking of one of several paintings by Robert that represent an enormous column of water set in a clearing, with surrounding dark trees and rows of columns at a respectful distance, the size and power of the central plume emphasized by a small group of spectators silhouetted darkly against it. The narrator is struck first by its seeming stillness: "It looked more like an artistic creation than water."[4]

But an ambiguity exists in the enigmatic reference. As Baldwin remarks, it is not entirely clear which painting or actual fountain the Guermantes scene refers to; "There is no fountain commonly known as 'le jet d'eau d'Hubert Robert.'" There are fountains designed by him at Versailles; or it could refer to a real fountain in the park at Saint-Cloud, not designed by Robert but which he was fond of painting. It is impossible therefore to identify exactly which "real," extra-diegetic fountain Proust is referring to.

This is not the only enigma. Baldwin observes that the description becomes more complex as the seemingly static, single spout of water is

revealed as consisting of three jets, each placed slightly higher than the previous one, thus ensuring the illusion of a single continuous stream. Falling droplets from each jet descend on the drops of water that are rising, obliterating the new droplets as they mount. Baldwin sees the resulting fragmentation of the visual surface as an example of Proust's "cubism," suggesting a cubist-like collage in which the surface is "cut up and reassembled according to a compositional logic that owes nothing to mimetic function." But more problematic still is the peculiar behavior of the fountain: once replaced in its three-dimensional context, it violates narrative convention by violating Mme d'Arpajon: "Mme d'Arpajon has been copiously peed on, or the fountain or painting or whatever has ejaculated" (Baldwin 481–93). It is as if the inanimate, painterly jet of water has suddenly been accorded animate, indeed animal, capacities. Baldwin is led to ask, "Is it a cunning allegory of artistic modernism, or a fascinating and disturbing mess?"

According to Hayden White in an article published some years earlier, the "fountain" description is anything but a disturbing mess (158–72). Situating the "fountain" sequence in the preceding narrative context of *Sodom and Gomorrah,* White breaks it down into four different phases, relating them to corresponding segments in the narration. These consist of the opening chapter of *Sodom and Gomorrah*, which recounts from a "hidden vantage point" a scene of "homosexual seduction"; of a chapter that relates the narrator's efforts to identify four types of "hangers-on of noble society"; and of the actual encounter with the Prince de Guermantes. Like the ensuing "fountain" description, the "prince scene" is "structured as a succession of four distinct perceptions" as the young narrator draws closer, progressing through illuminating stages of insight into "the difference between genuine nobility of character and its hypocritical imitation." Noting that the fountain is at once "never really quite described and over-described," White remarks that it is less the "fountain" that is the referent than "the process of translating attentive seeing into language"—in other words, the passage provides its own ironic key as to how it should be interpreted.

Ascribing "meta-narrational" and "meta-interpretive" functions to the passage, Hayden White concludes that "the fountain scene provides a paradigm of how to read the three more extensive scenes of interpretation that precede it." It may further be seen as an allegory for artistic creation:

once inserted into social reality, the work of art takes on a life of its own. (By extension, one might be tempted to think the same holds true of critical interpretation, as pots of ink dash vainly against the Hubert Robert jet without ever quite resolving its enigma.) The description of the fountain, White notes, is framed by two acts of "deviation," the first being the prince's sudden rudeness to Swann; the second, the fountain's abrupt wetting of Mme d'Arpajon. Bluntly put, nothing in society is quite as it first appears: the fountain and the prince both violate their anticipated norms of behavior. When we learn some pages later that in fact the prince had taken Swann aside to inform him of his own conversion to the Dreyfus cause, the viewer's assumptions are again reversed.

Marie-Magdeleine Chirol's *L'imaginaire de la ruine dans A la recherche du temps perdu de Marcel Proust* devotes several chapters to the Hubert Robert fountain, minutely noting the stylistic details that suggest "ruinist" tendencies and thus necessarily evoke the inevitable decadence of society and the passing of time. Like Hayden White, Chirol situates the passage in its narrative context, noting the lack of transition from the "prince" scene to the "jet" description: "The abrupt transition from prince to fountain is intriguing, if only from a narrative point of view."[5] The brusque transition suggests that when the narrator finally meets the prince, the encounter is disappointing; it is quickly replaced by another anticipated event, the sight of the fountain, "as if it were the real purpose behind this introduction in the prince's garden." The actual "fountain" Chirol sees as symbolic of social ascension: Mme Verdurin, Odette Swann, and the narrator himself all rise in society (especially pertinent if one recalls that a widowed Mme Verdurin will eventually, astoundingly, become princesse de Guermantes, while the ubiquitous Odette ends up as mistress to the Duc).

Tracing the "fountain" passage through eight stages of composition, Chirol finds another *avant-texte* or rough draft describing "a delightful painting by Hubert Robert, showing that very fountain in the Guermantes gardens, looking much the same as they do today." This mention of the Robert painting, previously in the possession of the Guermantes, is suppressed in the final version of the text, which Chirol terms "a pictorial and literary composition where the creative spurts of artist and writer blend with those of a fountain and a constantly renewed ruin." Like Hayden White, Chirol views the Robert "jet" as an allegory of artistic creation; the rising, falling droplets also provide an excellent metaphor for the

processes of memory and forgetting, "a fountain that symbolically evokes the wellspring of memory, hence of oblivion."

Both White and Chirol notice the abrupt transition from the "prince" meeting to the "fountain" description, without however probing the psychological ramifications of this brusqueness. But in drawing attention to the *painterly* aspects of Robert's *Sodom and Gomorrah* fountain, it is Baldwin who raises an even more interesting question when he remarks that "Mme d'Arpajon has been copiously peed on, or the fountain or painting or whatever has ejaculated" (481–93). *The fountain or painting or whatever* . . . It is as if a valiant colleague has thrown up his hands, with a courage one can only laud. Baldwin has ascribed *intentionality* to the suddenly animate fountain. Can this be justified? Searching once again through the fourfold description, we find the word *désobéissant* ("disobedient"): "Unfortunately a gust of wind could drive it obliquely towards the ground; sometimes a single disobedient jet would actually diverge."[6] In other words, sometimes mishaps are due to nature, or a simple breeze; and sometimes a single jet *disobeys* the impeccably geometric design of its creator. When the fountain actually drenches Mme d'Arpajon, the culprit is nature, a warm gust of wind. But further down we read the word *malicious*: "the water, maliciously staining the edge of the basin"[7]—and ambiguity returns, as if the wetting were malicious and intentional.

In both his subsequent book *The Picture as Spectre* and in his *French Studies* article, Baldwin examines several possible literary sources or antecedent texts, including a passage from Denis Diderot's *Salon de 1767* (criticizing Robert's *La Cascade tombant entre deux terrasses au milieu d'une colonnade,* literally "the cascade falling between two terraces and a colonnade"), and the description of a fountain in Michel de Montaigne's *Voyage en Italie* (Montaigne describes the *verges*—interesting choice of word, since it can mean both "rod" and "penis"—of two opposing jets colliding so violently that "a continuous thick rain" results). While these texts do present similarities of theme and vocabulary, none appears to confer *intentionality* on the waterworks they describe. This invention must therefore be Proust's alone—unless there is some other intertext as yet unconsidered. I propose as a candidate for this missing influence a simple word in a title, the title of Guillaume de Machaut's complex vision poem of 1361, *The Fountain of Love* (or *Le Dit de la Fonteinne Amoureus* [The Lay of the Amorous Fountain]).

While I cannot actually prove that Proust ever read Machaut, it seems highly unlikely that a writer so prodigiously cultured, so fascinated by medieval architecture and aesthetics, could not at least have been aware of his existence—more unlikely still if one considers that the first edition of Machaut's *Oeuvres Complètes* was published by Ernest Hoepffner in Paris in 1908, just when Proust was finishing the essays now known as *Contre Sainte-Beuve,* and beginning work on what was to become *In Search of Time Lost.* Although Machaut, at the time he composed *The Fountain of Love,* was a respected poet and composer, in succeeding centuries his work was known only through a few fragments until the Hoepffner edition.[8] The publication of his complete works thus constituted a significant literary event, of which Proust could hardly have remained unaware.

To a modern mind the idea of an "amorous" fountain may appear disconcerting, even slightly grotesque, since an inanimate object cannot technically become "amorous" at all. Of course, Machaut's fountain is not actually "in love": it is simply that the water from the "fonteinne amoureuse" makes anyone who drinks it fall in love,[9] whereas the Proust/Robert "jet" practically rapes poor Mme d'Arpajon. Caught by the warm breeze, the twisted jet drenches her so thoroughly, dripping down the inside of her dress, that "she was as soaking wet as if she had been plunged into a bath."[10] To a twentieth-century mind the idea of a literally amorous fountain would naturally conjure up burlesque images. Proust, who had a highly developed sense of the incongruous, may well have been struck by Machaut's title and pondered in some amusement what an "amorous" fountain might do. Given that he often used the technique of taking figures of speech literally for comic effect,[11] I suggest that he had half-recalled Machaut's title, "literalized" it, and with gusto incorporated the resulting image into the "fountain" sequence of *Sodom and Gomorrah.*

In the absence of direct reference to Machaut, this is hard to prove. But the difficulty of demonstrating beyond all doubt that Proust had actually read Machaut need not offer an insuperable obstacle in the intertextual goose-chase I propose. Contrary to what is often supposed, Proust did not always reveal his sources. Indeed, according to Luzius Keller in *Marcel Proust: la fabrique de Combray,* he sometimes went to great lengths to conceal them. Keller makes this startling assertion while discussing the implications of a seemingly innocent article by Mark A. Weiner that appeared in 1980. Weiner had noticed arresting similarities between the madeleine

episode and a creative block experienced by Wagner during the composition of *Tristan und Isolde.* The block was resolved when Mathilde Wesendock sent the composer a packet of dry Zwieback biscuits, which Wagner soaked in milk and presumably raised to his lips. Keller rejects Weiner's modest claim that the resemblance is purely accidental; for Keller, this thematic parallel has all the elements of "un véritable noeud intertextuel" ("real intertextual knot"; Keller, *Proust* 15).

Apart from textual resemblances, there appears to be no actual proof that Proust indeed read Wagner's letter to Mathilde of May 9, 1859, in which he describes the Zwieback tasting; publication of the correspondence, begun in 1904 in Parisian journals, stopped just before that letter. Undeterred, Keller reasons that Proust must have read it "in book form," or that he knew of it by some other means. "Whatever the case," Keller concludes, "he was determined to efface any visible traces that Wagner's miraculous dry biscuit could have left in his writing."[12] Clearly, the madeleine episode—which Edmund White proclaims "the most famous symbol in French literature"—would lose something of its renowned literary originality if Proust had chosen to surround it with acknowledgments to Wagner (1).

A major similarity between Proust and Machaut is their preoccupation with the problem of plausibility in creating narrative perspective. Both writers are keenly aware of the advantages and limitations of adopting a coherently subjective point of view. In *Swann's Way* we enter the narrative via the subjective viewpoint of an anonymous, insomniac narrator, apparently hovering in time outside his narrative. He recalls an unspecified period of time when he went to bed early: he would fall asleep, only to wake half an hour later in a state of spatiotemporal confusion. Often he would think himself the subject of his bedside book: a church, a string quartet, an historical rivalry. Wavering between sleep and a conscious state, he would slip into an erotic dream about a woman, only to be roused from slumber by the desire she inspired. After several pages this unspecified period of recollection and reverie—"Longtemps je me suis couché de bonne heure" ("For a long time I went to bed early")—gives way to more active and precise memories: the magic lantern, the trauma of the goodnight kiss, his mother's reading of *François le Champi.* And then the processes of memory are blocked: he remembers nothing significant until one day the tyranny of chance causes him to drink a cup of tea and dunk a

stumpy little madeleine. From this trivial hazard all of Combray is reborn. We know all this, of course; what matters here is the double genesis of memory and narrative.

At the time when he wrote *The Fountain of Love*, Guillaume de Machaut was a renowned composer and one of the foremost poets of his day. In a rather digressive preamble his anonymous narrator—whom I shall call Guillaume—presents himself as a clerk of modest birth, a fearful and inept man who avoids danger on the battlefield by sticking close to his master, a nobleman. His actual narrative begins when he evokes a restless night spent in the house of some unidentified aristocrat. When, finally, Guillaume falls asleep, his unstable repose is interrupted by appalling cries from the adjoining room. Initially terrified, he is soon relieved to discover that the dreadful wails are merely poetry, the versified declamations of a young aristocrat who, like Guillaume, is disastrously in love. The clerk-narrator hastily grabs his pen and scribbles down the poetic plaints, which assume highly sophisticated verse forms with a hundred different rhymes. Next morning, he learns that the young aristocrat is none other than Jean, Duc de Berry. Guillaume contrives to station himself on the duke's path and goes down on one knee. The duke immediately recognizes him and tells Guillaume not to kneel: clearly, this narrator is no lowly clerk, but a distinguished poet who is known to and respected by the nobility. The two men become friends; the narrator presents Jean with the transcript of his lamentations, and the delighted young duke takes the elder poet into a magnificent garden, the centerpiece of which is an unusually superb fountain.

The fountain's water, which gushes abundantly from twelve gilded snake heads, has the power of causing anyone who drinks from it to fall in love—hence the poem's title. Its workings are impressive:

> Onques mais en jour de ma vie
> Ne vie si bien oeuvre assevie.
> En milieu estoit atachiez
> Uns serpens d'or a .xii. chiés
> Qui par engiens et par conduis
> Estoient ad ce faire duis
> Que la fonteinne sans sejour
> Gettoient de nuit et de jour. (*Fonteinne* 1341–48)

> (Never in the days of my life / Had I seen work so very accomplished. / In the middle was fixed / A serpent with twelve heads all of gold / Through which by machinery and conduits / It had been designed / That the fountain without ceasing / Would flow both night and day.) (Trans. Palmer, *Fountain* 161)

Invited to sample the water, the narrator politely refuses, since he is already suffering enough from love. Evidently exhausted by his sleepless night, the young duke falls asleep beside the multi-phallic structure, his head resting on his new friend's lap; there being nobody about, the no less exhausted narrator sinks into slumber too. Both men then dream the same dream, which involves a series of embedded dreams and narratives including the story of Alcyone and Ceys. Late in the embedded tale Venus appears and chides the duke for his erroneous presumptions: he has failed to see that it is she, Venus, who determines the course of love, and not the god of sleep, Morpheus, whom Jean had hoped to engage as a sort of dream emissary to his beloved. Venus obliges the young woman to appear, still within the dream; she bends over the sleeping duke, kissing him many times, and takes his diamond ring, substituting her own ruby. When Jean awakes he is astonished to find his lady's ring on his finger. Machaut has engaged in a sophisticated infraction of his own framing devices, as an element of dream invades reality.

The complexity of Machaut's system of embedded narratives, with dreams that spill over into "reality," rivals the complexity of Proust's temporal perspectives, in which there is a constant play between the detached hindsight of the older narrator and the involved viewpoint of the inexperienced child-hero or younger protagonist. Strangely, the extra-temporal situation of Proust's narrator is not unlike that of Guillaume. With Proust's opening sentence still in mind, we are surprised to read, in Machaut's text,

> I n'a pas lonc temps que j'estoie
> En un lit ou pas ne dormoie,
> Einsois faisois la dorveille,
> Com cil qui dort et encor veille
> Car j'aloie de dor en dor
> Por ce que assez envis m'endor

> Quant aucune merencolie
> Avec ma pensee se lie. (*Fonteinne* 61–68)
>
> (Not long ago I was / In a bed and not sleeping, / But, rather, wakeful, like a man who sleeps yet is awake, / For I was tossing and turning / Because I find falling asleep truly hard / When some sad mood / Dominates my thoughts.) (Trans. Palmer, *Fountain* 93)

Could Proust have read this *introit*? Are we to view this manner of suspending a narrator between sleep, wakefulness, and dreams as pure coincidence? We are accustomed to regard Proust as the all-time, preeminent exponent of subjective memory narration. But Machaut was particularly inclined to use this type of narrative perspective in his long vision or judgment poems, assigning the task of storytelling to an anonymous, subjective narrator of manifest literary bent. As William Calin remarks in R. Barton Palmer's *Chaucer's French Contemporaries*, the *Voir Dit* [True Story], constitutes the "first I-narrative in modern literature constructed on and grounded in the limited, restricted point of view of the narrator-hero" (39). Palmer discerns in *Le Dit de la Fonteinne amoureuse* "the structural division between a frame dominated by a narrator who is the poet's obvious alter ego, and a dream that represents a movement towards consolation through the revelations of a higher truth" (189). Like Calin, Palmer argues that "Machaut's texts . . are deliberately reflexive and overtly intertextual; the judgement poems construct their own web of references and presences, thereby attaining a hitherto unimagined degree of reflexivity and self-containment" (xix). Palmer further remarks that the "judgment" poems create an autonomous universe including a commentary that shows the poet's awareness of his own productivity; in this sense they are "metafictions."

In a similar vein one may quote Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Book of the Duchess*, which Proust may not have read but must certainly have been aware of while working on his Ruskin translations.[13] This text, which contains extensive borrowings from Machaut's *Fonteinne*, is described by Ardis Butterfield in *The Familiar Enemy* as "the first time in an English love narrative" that a poem starts with the word "I." The poem "represents the first encounter not just of Chaucer but of any English poet with the first-person French love narrative" (Butterfield 359). It opens with the

melancholic struggles of yet another insomniac poet-narrator tossing vainly in his bed:

> I have gret wonder, be this light,
> How that I lyve, for day ne nyght
> I may not slepe wel nygh noght
> I have so many an ydel thoght
> Purely for defaute of slep
> That, by my trouthe, I take no kep
> Of nothing. (Chaucer, ed. Benson 330; *Duchess* 1–7)

Chaucer's hapless narrator views insomnia as a sickness that has afflicted him for some eight years, for which he knows no cure, and which deprives him of all enjoyment in life. On one such sleepless night he calls for a French romance to be brought, "To rede and drive the nyght away" (*Duchess* 49), thinking this better than the gaming tables. Any hope he might have had of being bored to sleep soon disappears, however: the stories he reads, including that of Alcyone and Ceys—the principal story embedded in Guillaume and Jean's dream in *Fonteinne*—so fascinate him that he himself enters the universe of the text. All three authors, then—Machaut, Chaucer, Proust—share a common strategy: insomniac first-person narrators who read or overhear a text, and enter into or become the material of the story.[14]

In the case of Proust this narrative infraction may appear relatively modest, at first sight; thinking oneself a string quartet or a church or a historical rivalry is mild compared to the wildly sophisticated embeddings found in Machaut's shared dream. But in his *incipit* Proust, addicted to the structure of mise-en-abîme, is actually prefiguring the experience of the reader: the experience-to-come. At the end of *Le Temps retrouvé* the narrator, facing the enormous task of composition that awaits him, in uncertain health, with limited time, reflects that a reader is someone who recreates the experiences of the book within himself: "I thought more modestly of my book, and it would even be inaccurate, in thinking of those who would read it, to say, of my readers. For they would not be, in my view, my readers, but rather their own readers, readers of themselves." [15] The narrator compares his book to a kind of magnifying glass sold by the optician in Combray, an optical instrument enabling readers to read "within themselves." Recognizing that "divergences" may occur, he observes that

such differences do not necessarily result from his own errors, but more from the readers' varying capacities for re-creation, according to their possession of a less suitable set of eyes. In this connection, it is interesting to observe that Proust actually engages his imaginary reader in close-to-interactive dialogue, just before the "prince" and "fountain" sequences: in a segment ignored by exegetes of the scene, the narrator imagines his reader impatiently inquiring, for example: "'Well come on then, did Mme d'Arpajon introduce you to the Prince?' No, but pipe down and let me get on with my story."[16] This imaginary interaction may be seen as another kind of narrative "deviation" or revolt: the reader's impatience anticipating, perhaps, the "deviant" swerves of both the prince and the waterspout. An equivalent moment occurs at the end of *Fonteinne* when the poet-narrator asks his audience: "Tell me, was this well dreamed?"

Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* is deemed to have been massively borrowed from several French sources, most pertinently the vision and judgment poems of Machaut; so rampant is the borrowing that Palmer actually terms Chaucer's work a "translation." No condemnation is implied: the society of Chaucer's time expected and accepted such literary imitation; indeed, it was considered a form of flattery. Palmer propounds the theory that in a case of massive influence, the secondary text obliterates the primary text while simultaneously re-creating it: necessarily, it recalls that text to mind, modifies it, presents it in a different light. For Butterfield the question of influence is complex and paradoxical because Chaucer is deemed to be consciously creating a literary Englishness—a circumstance that is itself determined by a French tradition against which he reacts. In fact, Butterfield, quoting James Wimsatt, points out that Chaucer's opening lines—"I have gret wonder . . How that I live"—are the same as Froissart's in *Le Paradys d'amour:* Je suis de moi en grant mervelle / Comment tant vifs . . (1–2)[17]

Machaut himself is traditionally viewed as drawing on sources such as the *Roman de la Rose* and Froissart for his "fountain" description. But it is not absurd to suppose that Machaut, visibly concerned with giving his works a plausible if imaginative genesis, had influenced Chaucer to reflect on the structure of creative narratives, and on the relationship between structure and perspective.

What is apparent from this brief comparison is that Machaut, Proust, and, to some extent, Chaucer shared a concern with narrative perspective;

in particular, the texts of Machaut and Proust present a high degree of *reflexity,* of narrative self-consciousness, of meta-narrativity—almost as if the reader were constantly invited to be present at the genesis of the text. Given the clearly phallic nature of the fountains in *Sodom* and in *Fonteinne,* one can be forgiven for wondering if these waterpieces do not have a generative significance—a role in auto-fecundation—that goes beyond the purely decorative function they perform as conversation pieces in high-end aristocratic gardens.

In Guillaume de Machaut's era there could be no overt mention of onanism in a work intended for a courtly audience. However, in our immodest modernity we may certainly wonder about the hidden meaning of his priapic "amorous" fountain, with its supporting pillar of ivory, the story of Narcissus carved on its side, in front of which the two exhausted poets, leaning against each other, fall asleep and dream the same dream. In the words of Margaret Ehrhart, "The garden's focal point is the amorous fountain that induces love in those who drink its water. Since the fountain's circulating water flows into a basin through a golden twelve-headed serpent (1343) with obvious phallic associations, the flowing stream resembles rather more than slightly the discharge of the seminal fluid in the sex act" (Palmer, *Chaucer's* 137). Is this a symbol of circularity, of self-fertilization, a source of poetic genesis, a strategy to conceal the insemination of the text by two sympathizing males, both literary men, who have just struck up a remarkably warm friendship in idyllic horticultural settings in a remarkably short space of time? If that is the case, the metafictional texts are endowed with another dimension of self-consciousness by the element of implied masturbation—possibly even homoerotic masturbation.[18]

The episode of the wayward spray in *Sodom and Gomorrah* can reasonably be seen as the deferred appearance of a primary creative "spurt" that Proust had initially developed in *Contre Sainte-Beuve,* only to suppress it during the successive stages of *Combray*. I refer to the now-notorious description of Proust's first experience of masturbation. A number of critics—Philippe Lejeune, Serge Doubrovsky, Julia Kristeva, and more recently Jacqueline Risset—have convincingly demonstrated the close resemblance between this autoerotic passage and the episode of the madeleine. The rigorous analyses leave no room for doubt: back in 1974 Doubrovsky devoted an entire book to the subject. Kristeva has

brought entirely to light the hidden psychological links between *François le Champi* (in which the foundling François grows up to marry his somewhat older foster mother, Madeleine—the crucial love scene taking place beside a fountain) and the drama of the goodnight kiss, connecting the *drame du coucher* with the implicitly onanistic reminiscence triggered by the madeleine. Lejeune, who wrote the pioneering article in this fertile field, draws the analogy between masturbation and the process of reminiscence; between the orgasmic experience of self-fertilization and the "cascade" of images—Kristeva's term—that becomes Combray. "The first masturbation produces the same effects as the reminiscences: feelings of power, eternity, immensity. Death is defeated, the mind encompasses the universe."[19] The epiphanic words of the madeleine episode, "j'avais cessé de me sentir médiocre, contingent, mortel" ("I had ceased to feel mediocre, contingent, mortal") recall the "je ne pouvais mourir" ("I could not die") of the *Contre Sainte-Beuve* masturbation; furthermore, the two passages follow the same rhythm, with the same mounting tension and the same feeling of deliverance and ecstasy when success is attained. As Lejeune puts it, the self is forced to act upon itself, manually and spiritually, to bring forth the joy that is within itself.

The *moi* is forced to act upon itself. Lejeune thus renders perfectly clear the link between reflexivity and self-fertilization in this textual liberation of seemingly immortal joy. But more significant to our present purpose is the evident connection between the *Contre Sainte-Beuve* masturbation and the *jet d'eau* sequence: "I paused for breath . . Finally an opalescent stream ("jet d'opale") rose in successive spurts, like those of the fountain at Saint-Cloud, recognizable in the portrait Hubert Robert did of it."[20] The reference here could scarcely be more explicit: it is even duplicated by a pun, "jet d'opale," *jet d'eau pâle.*

Clearly, the Robert fountain is firmly associated in Proust's mind with the experience of orgasmic masturbation—on a fairly heroic scale, given the towering dimensions of the waterspout in a typical Hubert Robert painting. We need not be unduly perturbed for now by the vexed question of which Robert "portrait" Proust could possibly have been referring to, but it seems fairly safe to say that a painting of a jet of water in the park at Saint-Cloud is involved. As we learn from the goodnight kiss drama, there is a reference to such a painting—or to an image of it—in *Combray,* just before the hero's mother reads to him from *François le Champi.* The

narrator's grandmother, ever intent on providing images with "an extra level of art" for the child's edification, after due consultation with the knowledgeable Swann has given him "photographs of Chartres cathedral as painted by Corot, the fountains of Saint-Cloud by Hubert Robert, and Vesuvius, by Turner."[21] The key words are, of course, Hubert Robert and Saint-Cloud. Not only does the child-hero have a photograph of the Robert painting ever present in his room but also it hangs in the company of cathedral spires and volcanoes—all gifts from his well-intentioned grandmother, who also buys him George Sand's rustic novels for his birthday on account of their charmingly old-fashioned vocabulary.

Philippe Lejeune unhesitatingly accords the experience of narcissistic orgasm a central place in the "architecture secrète" of *In Search of Time Lost.* It was perhaps beyond the scope of his pioneering article to indicate just how this secret architecture is developed, or even what, exactly, such a term might mean; but the idea is too intriguing to be left at that. If we include the masturbation scene in *Contre Sainte-Beuve* and view it as a kind of *avant-texte* to the briefer and more discreet allusion in Proust's final text (reduced to a mention or two of solitary *volupté* in the iris-scented loo), we may discern three figurations of the Hubert Robert waterspout: the first, "suppressed," in the opening pages of *Swann's Way*; the second, following the drama of the goodnight kiss; the third, in *Sodom and Gomorrah*, approximately at the midpoint of the entire enormous novel. There are, of course, other references to fountains in the *Search;* but none have quite the impact of the Robert "jet."

For the sake of architectural balance one might seek to add a further mention of a "jet" that occurs toward the end of *Time Regained,* during the ultimate matinée given by la princesse de Guermantes. The narrator, reflecting on the many changes that have taken place in Parisian society during his long absence, is considering his own meteoric rise from bourgeois interloper to friend of the Guermantes—an ascension that now strikes him as far less exceptional than he had previously supposed. "I could see that this social phenomenon was not as rare as I had first supposed, and that from the fountain-basin of Combray, where I was born, numerous other jets of water had risen symmetrically with me, raising themselves above the same liquid mass that had nurtured them."[22] The word *bassin*, which can also mean "pelvis," suggests Combray is in some

sense his mother, while the narrator seems to view himself as one of many *jets d'eau*.

A sketch for this passage expresses the same ideas but in slightly different words: in the earlier version the "bassin de Combray" is simply the "petty bourgeois basin into which I was born" ("le bassin petit-bourgeois où j'étais né"). While there appear to be no onanistic associations here, the passage casts retrospective light on the episode of the fountain in *Sodom*, reinforcing Chirol's assertion that the Hubert Robert "jet" can be seen as a metaphor for social ascension—and descent. The snobbish Mme d'Arpajon, drenched by the temperamental waterspout, has been punished for deserting the narrator—and also for her intellectual mediocrity (she has earlier expressed some undistinguished opinions on Victor Hugo, considering "Lorsque l'enfant paraît" to be the high point of his work) and for being merely an *ex*-mistress to the Duc de Guermantes. An implacable set of laws governs social change in *Search:* be it due to the tyranny of historical chance, the absolutism of sexual desire, the insuperable appeal of great wealth, or the ineluctable passing of Time, the old order is constantly renewed and replaced, much like the eternally obliterated droplets in the triple waterspout.

Several times I have used the word *suppressed* when referring to the onanistic passage in *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, absent from the overture to *La Recherche.* Various instances of "suppression," or odd lacunae, occur in the "fountain" sequence of *Sodom.* Mary Madeline Chirol and Hayden White both have noticed the abrupt transition from "prince" to "fountain," with Chirol suggesting that the narrator, slightly disappointed by his meeting with the prince, sees the fountain as the next eagerly anticipated event. For White, the fountain snaps the narrator out of his distracted state. But why is he distracted? Is it because his alter ego Swann has seemingly just been ejected before his very gaze? Is he mad with relief at having finally been introduced, rather than himself being ejected as a gatecrasher? Or is some deeper mental mechanism at work?

What the narrator tells us is that he is so distracted he notices no further sound—not the Czech orchestra, not the constantly exploding Bengal fireworks. He is, one might say, in a different dimension, "spaced out": "I recovered my wits slightly at the thought of going to see Hubert Robert's celebrated fountain."[23] It is not the fountain that drags him from his

distraction: it is he who suddenly, with no prior textual warning, thinks of going to see the "celebrated" plume. And what makes it so celebrated? Apart from the mention of the photograph of Robert's "grandes eaux de Saint-Cloud" in his bedroom at Combray, we have not explicitly heard of a *jet d'eau* by Hubert Robert until now; the description of the Robert painting previously owned by the Guermantes has been "suppressed."

We are left with a fourfold painterly description that contains no hint of sound until Mme d'Arpajon is wetted and the thunderous guffaws of Grand-Duc Wladimir burst forth. The Grand-Duc laughs loudly enough to be heard by a whole army: a growly laugh dragged out in fits and starts, as if addressed not to the entire army all at once, but to each brigade in succession.[24] Mme d'Arpajon, who *pretended not to hear* when the narrator asked for an introduction, has now been humiliated by noisy imperial mirth before the equivalent of several imaginary regiments. Uncomplaining, she brushes herself off. The ejaculation of the fountain is doubled—tripled, quadrupled—by the renewed cascades of laughter, by the Grand-Duc's exclamation, "Bravo old girl!" and by the clapping of his hands. Finally, we are permitted to imagine the sound of the fountain: Mme d'Arpajon has pretended not to hear again, this time ignoring the Grand-Duc's "consoling" word, which some kind soul draws to her attention: "And since someone, deafened by the noise of the water—drowned out nonetheless by His Highness's thunderous roar—began to say 'I think his Imperial Highness said something to you.'"[25] The water-fall is deafening, as we finally learn—but not as deafening as the imperial guffaws.

In the fourfold description of the fountain, or "jet d'eau," we have seen an almost cinematic technique employed as the narrator draws closer to the waterpiece, each stage of his approach triggering a different perception. The sudden introduction of sound into the narrative is abruptly effective, as if a silent film had suddenly gone "talkie." One may assume that the effect is deliberate. However, the narrator's peculiar distractedness, coupled with the strange silence of the falling water during the actual description, invites us to probe further. As a scurrilous footnote, one may incidentally remark that Marcel Duchamp's *Fontaine*, or male urinal, was exhibited and caused a scandal in 1917—some years before the publication of *Sodom*. In a similar vein one might draw attention to the notoriety of public urinals at the time as homosexual meeting-grounds and places where men might masturbate. Philippe Boyer, in *Le petit pan de mur jaune*,

decodes the secret meanings of the baron de Charlus's *pissotière* and acquaints us with an esoteric practice apparently not unknown in urinals: that of immersing a piece of biscuit, or bread, or cake, in a cup of urine, and raising it to one's lips. Proust, like Charlus—Boyer assures us—was acquainted with this onanistic technique. Though hardly elegant this nutshell of information would certainly cast both the madeleine episode and the possibly concealed Wagner-Zwieback influence in a new light.

Given the onanistic associations of the Robert "jet d'eau," one can hardly ignore the possibility that Proust's narrator is hopelessly distracted, to the point of seeming deafness, and his description of the fountain, curiously quiet, precisely because of some aspect of the same psychic conflict that causes Proust to "code" or "suppress" explicit references to masturbation. A chain of stressful semiotic or biographical circumstances would seem to attend Proust's metaphorical "presence at the fountain." One must now invoke the "poisonous" role of anti-Semitism in the psychology of the young Proust, linked to the guilt no doubt occasioned both by an addiction to onanism and an intense oedipal devotion to his mother.

Had Proust indeed walked into a bookstore in 1908, seen Machaut's *Jugement du roi de Navarre* lying on a table with other new editions and casually perused the opening pages, he might well have been intrigued. Dismayed and intrigued, for this judgment poem presents a far more sinister and disturbing use of fountains than that found in *Fonteinne*. Here Machaut offers us another subjective, fearful narrator who has retreated into his own house and barricaded himself inside in the hopes of avoiding the plague. This self-sequestering would seem sensible enough, were the poem's overture not marked by a passage in which Guillaume—expounding an idea only too common in the fourteenth century—holds the Jews responsible for poisoning the wells and fountains in order to spread the plague:

Après ce, vint une merdaille
Fausse, traitre et renoie:
Ce fut Judée la honnie
La mauvaise, la desloyal,
Qui het bien et aimme tout mal,
Qui tant donna d'or et d'argent
Et promist a crestienne gent,

> Que puis, rivières et fonteinnes
> Qui estoient cleres et seines
> En plusieurs lieus empoisonnerent.[26]
>
> ("After this, a group of scoundrels came / Who were false, traitorous, and heretical: / This was shameful Judea, / The evil, the disloyal, / Who hate good and love all evil doing, / Who gave and promised much / Gold and silver to the Christian people, / And then, in many places, / They poisoned the wells, streams and fountains / Which had been clear and healthy.") (Trans. Palmer, *Navarre*)

Far from the amorous fountain is the poisoned well, river, or fountain which kills, but what connection could this peculiarly vitriolic passage have to do with Proust?

I suggest a possible link—and motive for sublimation—in the idea of pollution. While Proust was careful to establish certain signal differences between himself and his narrator, the masturbatory avowals of *Combray*, even in their vastly reduced form, constitute a "real" resemblance between the two. That Proust considered himself guilty of "self-pollution"—a quaint term seldom used today, but current in 1900[27]—seems quite probable, given the alarm caused by his onanistic habits. Whereas the Proust of history is now considered predominantly Jewish and homosexual, the narrator of *In Search of Time Lost* presents himself as being Catholic and straight. This fact is noted by Elaine Marks in her *Marrano as Metaphor*. Marks analyses a passage from *Contre Sainte-Beuve* in which Proust discusses Jean Racine's *Esther,* indicating parallels between the biblical couple of Esther and Ahasuerus and that of *CSB*'s narrator and his mother, and revealing for the first time that his mother is Jewish—"the beautiful lines of her Jewish face marked by a Christian sweetness and Jansenist courage." The passage, for Marks, is significant: "For here, and not ever in *Remembrance of Things Past,* the narrator's mother is referred to as Jewish, or at least as having a 'Jewish face.'" Not only that, but the same paragraph contains Proust's implicit "coming out" in relation both to his Jewish mother and to his intimate friend the composer Reynaldo Hahn. "The narrator's own ethnic and sexual identity, so carefully protected in *Remembrance of Things Past,* is obliquely disclosed in this earlier text in relation to Racine's play" (Marks 37).

Even in his actual life Proust seems to evince ambivalence in regard to his Jewish identity; Marks has further shown that in the *Search* he confers a rather problematic equivalence on homosexuals and Jews, assigning both groups a not wholly favorable minority status. Marks also notices "a certain complicity between the characters" who are revealed as homosexuals, which "may well be attributed to sexual preference, which Proust compares explicitly to the complicity among Jews" (81). In a letter of 1896 to the virulently anti-Semitic Robert de Montesquiou, Proust himself displays a magisterial ambiguity and diplomacy in handling the delicate question of his own identity: "Monsieur, I did not reply yesterday to your question about the Jews. The reason was quite simple: while I am myself a Catholic, like my father and brother, my mother is Jewish. You will understand that this is sufficient reason for me to abstain from this kind of discussion."[28] "Catholic like my father . . ." Proust denies his Jewish birth even as he affirms it, "my mother is Jewish."

If the inferior status of Machaut's "povre homme" required him to rely upon literary prowess and flattery in order to advance socially, the plight of the young Proust was even more delicate: not only was he middle-class, he was also Jewish and homosexual. It is never intimated that the narrator of the *Search* suffers from this dual disadvantage; yet masturbation is confessed, albeit feebly, in the opening pages. In real life—to the great dismay of his parents, who feared for the health of their sickly child—the adolescent Proust suffered the additional disadvantage of being addicted to onanism, and evidence attests to the concern this caused his family.[29] Many years later, after much of the *Search* had been published, Emmanuel Berl—and reportedly, the Comtesse de Noailles—accused Proust of having confused onanism with love in the vast novel, a reproach that annoyed him considerably.

Even if the young Proust's family had treated his habit with tact and open-mindedness, the concern his masturbations caused them would inevitably have induced traumatic guilt in one so hypersensitive. Adrien Proust, father of Marcel, was a pillar of the French Republic, a noted expert on public hygiene and quarantine who published some thirty articles or treatises under his own name, and several books with colleagues. It must have been a source of considerable humiliation to his morbidly sensitive son that Dr. Proust's *Hygiène du neurasthénique* explicitly links youthful onanism with crippling neurasthenia.

Adrien Proust's *Défense de l'Europe contre la peste* of 1897 is a rigorously documented study that would later supply a number of factual details for Albert Camus's *La Peste*. Proust's father recounts the history of the various epidemics of plague ever to have ravaged Europe. He quotes from the historian Symon de Covino, who had composed a Latin poem in rhyming couplets describing the horrors of the Black Death—the epidemic of 1347–50 for which Machaut blames in part the Jews. According to Dr. Proust, Covino tried to establish causal connections between the appearance of the plague and astrological phenomena, such as comets and conjunctions of the planets. He then adds, "A less innocent opinion, and the cause of violent persecutions, accused the Jews of having poisoned the wells by throwing a mixture of spiders, blood, bubons and poisonous animals down them."[30]

It is hard to imagine that Dr. Proust did not discuss his findings on public hygiene with his family as freely as he had discussed his elder son's narcissistic pleasures. As husband to a competent, sensitive, and highly cultured Jewish wife, he may very likely have raised in private with his sons the specter of the ancient calumny of Jews as poisoners of wells and fountains. Once again, Machaut is not quoted: Dr. Proust cites only scientific or historical accounts. However, assuming Marcel and his physician brother had read their father's book, they could hardly be unaware of the medieval slander.

Regardless of whether the young Marcel had read his father's work, we know that he was acquainted with this and many other calumnies against the Jews because he had read Théodore Reinach's *Histoire des Israélites depuis l'époque de leur dispersion.*[31] An advocate of Jewish assimilation and a near contemporary of Marcel, Reinach attributes the Jews' near-immunity to the plague of 1347–50 to their healthy lifestyle and social isolation. Nonetheless, "'The Jews poisoned the wells and fountains'—such was the cry that echoed everywhere, as it had thirty years earlier in Guyenne.'"[32] That Proust was indeed aware of it is textually indicated in the anti-Semitic tirade uttered by Albert Bloch in *Within a Budding Grove,* which contains an imprecation against the "swarm of Israelites infesting Balbec," "le fourmillement d'Israélites qui infestait Balbec."

According to Elaine Marks, the racial stereotype, common at the turn of the century, of a "swarm of Jews" connects these hypothetical great

numbers to animality and disease. As Marks laconically puts it, "Jews are like diseased animals that carry the plague, they take over, they infect, they kill" (81). Adding the calumny of polluted fountains to an already potent chain of association—fountain, onanism, mother, goodnight kiss, profanation, crippling guilt—one can readily imagine the resulting nexus and its effects upon the fictional text: a dialectic of sublimation or "suppression," offset by periodic and explicit moments of profanation or revolt.

Adrien Proust's *Défense de l'Europe* appeared in 1897, six years before the death of its author, in the middle of the Dreyfus crisis: an issue which, it need hardly be restated, marked a profound fissure in French high society—a fissure that grew only deeper, causing cracks and breaches like those in a painting of ruins. The Dreyfus issue also caused a fairly serious rift between Adrien and Marcel Proust, for Marcel's father did not approve of his having signed Émile Zola's petition demanding a new trial for Dreyfus; he refused to speak to his son for a whole week.[33] When Adrien Proust unexpectedly died, Marcel bitterly reproached himself for this quarrel, thereby adding to the associative chain of guilt.

Jews, polluters of the fountain . . If Proust, no doubt for aesthetic reasons, chose not to acknowledge the souvenir of Wagner in the episode of the madeleine, how much more likely would he have been to efface all mention of the vitriolic Machaut, for whom—had he indeed read him—he could only have entertained the most ambiguous admiration. Sharing that poet's concerns with narrative plausibility, with perspective, he appears to have subliminally retained the image of the amorous fountain, not simply as a metaphor for masturbation, but as an instrument of vengeance. To Machaut's erotic symbolism he adds a dimension of his own: the Hubert Robert fountain as an image of irrepressible social ascension. Just as creative onanism cannot forever be suppressed, so the talented individual must rise. Taking advantage of a violation in his own narrative conventions, might not Proust, in the form of his profaning fountain, have "ejaculated" or "peed," and from a great height, upon the society in which his maladroit young narrator strives to make his way?

Notes

Epigraph source: *Un livre est un grand cimetière où sur la plupart des tombes on ne peut plus lire les noms effacés.* From Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* 4.482. (Hereafter cited as *RTP*.)

1. Although it is not an exact equivalent I have mainly chosen the word "fountain" to translate "*jet d'eau,*" occasionally using "waterspout," "jet," or "waterpiece" for the sake of variety.

2. Volume titles given in translation follow those of either the Christopher Prendergast Penguin edition (*In Search of Lost Time)*, or the earlier version of F. Scott Moncrieff (*Remembrance of Things Past)*.

3. All translations are mine unless otherwise specified. "On le voyait de loin, svelte, immobile, durci, ne laissant agiter par la brise que la retombée plus légère de son panache pale et frémissant." Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, vol. 3, 56; hereafter referred to as *RTP*, followed by volume and page number.

4. "l'impression de l'art plutôt que de l'eau." *RTP* 3.56..

5. "Or ce passage du prince au jet d'eau, sans presque aucune transition, est intriguant, ne serait-ce que du point de vue narratif." Chirol, *L'Imaginaire* 31–63.

6. "Malheureusement un coup de vent suffisait à l'envoyer obliquement sur la terre; parfois même un simple jet désobéissant divergeait." *RTP* 3.56.

7. "l'eau qui souillait malicieusement la margelle de la vasque." *RTP* 3.56.

8. See Wright's discussion.

9. In the fourteenth century the word *amoureus* could have objective as well as subjective meanings: "capable of inducing love," as well as "enamoured."

10. "l'eau dégoulinant de son décolletage dans l'intérieur de sa robe, elle fut aussi trempée que si on l'avait plongé dans un bain." *RTP* 3.57.

11. For example, Dr. Cottard, whose dreadful puns punctuate many a Verdurin dinner, asks uncertainly one night: "c'est la voix d'or n'est-ce pas" ("Sarah Bernhardt, she's the voice of gold, right?") only to add "on dit qu'elle brûle les planches" ("they say she lights up the stage"). *RTP* 1.198. Scarcely has he uttered the words than he is struck by their literal absurdity, adding rather anxiously, "drôle d'expression d'ailleurs" ("funny expression, that"). For further examples of comic literalizing, see Slater.

12. Keller, "Quoi qu'il en soit, il a tenu à estomper toute trace visible que le miraculeux *Zwieback* de Wagner aurait pu laisser dans ses écrits" (15). In fairness to Proust, he did apparently at one point envisage framing a further involuntary memory episode with references to the opera *Parsifal.* It is worth noting that Proust's occasional occlusion of influences and sources extends to neuroscience. A fascinating book by Edward Bizub, *Proust et le moi divisé* (Geneva: Droz, 2006), examines the celebrated madeleine episode in the light of Proust's six-week

psychotherapeutic cure in the sanatorium of Dr. Paul Sollier, in 1905. Sollier's theories on voluntary and involuntary memory are conspicuously under-acknowledged by Proust.

13. That Proust was acquainted with Chaucer is apparent from a reference to "The Franklin's Tale" in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, which Proust knew well, and from the notes to his own translation of Ruskin, *Sésame et les lys,* of 1905–06. On p. 264 of the Antoine Compagnon edition, we find a note added by Proust explaining that Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* was imitated from Ovid and from Christian hagiography. This suggests that Proust's knowledge of Chaucer at least went beyond the *Canterbury Tales.*

For Ruskin's influence on Proust, Cynthia Gamble's *Proust as Interpreter of Ruskin* (Birmingham, AL: Summa Publications, 2002) is particularly useful.

14. I am indebted to Dr. Judy Weiss of Robinson College, Cambridge, for suggesting parallels between the incipit of *Combray* and *The Book of the Duchess.*

It is perhaps not entirely frivolous to note that the greater part of *Le Côté de Guermantes* could well have been entitled "The Book of the Duchess," given the narrator's overriding obsession with the duchesse de Guermantes.

15. "Je pensais plus modestement à mon livre, et ce serait même inexact de dire en pensant à ceux qui le liraient, à mes lecteurs. Car ils ne seraient pas, selon moi, mes lecteurs, mais les propres lecteurs d'eux-mêmes." *RTP* 4.610.

The narrator then acknowledges that the reader's ability to use his narrative as an optical instrument to read within himself may vary according to each reader's set of eyes.

16. "'Mais enfin, Mme d'Arpajon vous a-t-elle présenté au prince?' Non, mais taisez-vous et laissez-moi reprendre mon récit." *RTP* 3.52.

17. Jean Froissart, *Le Paradis d'amour; l'Orloge amoureus.* Quoted by Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy* 372.

18. See the detailed textual analysis of Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet in *Un Engin si soutil. Guillaume de Machaut et l'écriture au xiv*e *siècle* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1985). Cerquiglini-Toulet points out that almost the same words (*gens, joins, juenes, cointes)* are used to describe Jean de Berry (in *Fonteinne*) and the aristocratic lady who is in love with the older poet Guillaume in *Le Voir Dit.* According to Cerquiglini-Toulet, this complicates the interpretation of the two texts. Guillaume's solicitous gesture toward the young prince, in covering him with his cloak before both fall asleep, parallels a highly erotic scene by a cherry tree in the *Voir Dit*: "Ces rapprochements érotisent, *a posteriori*, les rapports du poète et du prince." *Un Engin si soutil* 118.

19. "La première masturbation produit les mêmes effets que les réminiscences: puissances, éternité, immensité. La mort est vaincue, l'esprit englobe l'univers." See Lejeune 113–43.

"Le moi est obligé d'agir sur lui-même, manuellement ou spirituellement, pour faire éclore cette joie qui est en lui."

20. "Je repris haleine un instant [. .] Enfin s'éleva un jet d'opale, par élans successifs, comme au moment où s'élance le jet d'eau de Saint-Cloud, que nous pouvons reconnaître [. .] dans le portrait qu'en a laissé Hubert Robert." Quoted by Lejeune, 113–43.

21. "Des photographies de la Cathédrale de Chartres par Corot, des Grandes Eaux de Saint-Cloud par Hubert Robert, du Vésuve par Turner." *RTP* 1.40.

22. "Je voyais que ce phénomène social n'était pas aussi isolé qu'il m'avait paru d'abord et que du bassin de Combray où j'étais né, assez nombreux en somme étaient les jets d'eau qui symmétriquement à moi s'étaient élevés au-dessus de la même masse liquide qui les avait alimentés." *RTP* 4.547.

23. "Je trouvai quelque faculté d'attention à la pensée d'aller voir le célèbre jet d'eau d'Hubert Robert." *RTP* 3.56.

24. "Un grognement . . assez fort pour pouvoir se faire entendre à toute une armée et pourtant prolongé par périodes comme s'il s'adressait non pas à l'ensemble, mais successivement à chaque partie des troupes. . ." *RTP* 3.57.

25. "Et comme quelqu'un lui disait, asourdi par le bruit de l'eau, que dominait pourtant le tonnerre de Monseigneur, 'Je crois que son Altesse Impériale vous a dit quelquechose'" *RTP* 3.57.

26. Machaut, *Navarre,* ed. and trans. Palmer 10. Cited also by René Girard in *Le Bouc Emissaire, from Œuvres de Guillaume de Machaut,* ed. Hoepffner 144–45.

27. According to Dictionnaire Littré, masturbation is a "genre de libertinage solitaire, nuisible à la santé"—a form of unhealthy solitary debauchery derived from the Latin *manus* ("hand") combined with the verb *stuprare* ("to pollute"). For *polluer* Littré provides a second meaning: "se polluer, v. réfl. Se souiller d'un certain péché d'impureté" (i.e., "to soil oneself with a certain sin of impurity"), the etymology being "Lat. *Polluere, mouiller* puis *souiller."*

28. "Monsieur, Je n'ai pas répondu hier à ce que vous m'avez demandé des juifs. C'est pour cette raison si simple: si je suis catholique comme mon père et mon frère, par contre ma mère est juive. Vous comprenez que c'est une raison assez forte pour que je m'abstienne de ce genre de discussions." Proust, *Correspondence* 66. This letter was apparently written after a discussion prompted by Émile Zola's article in *Le Figaro,* 16 May 1896, entitled "Pour les Juifs." Zola addresses complaints commonly leveled against the Jews, in the climate of the Dreyfus affair.

29. See, for example, Evelyn Bloch-Dano's biography of Proust's mother, *Madame Proust* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2007). In *How Proust Can Change Your Life* (London: Macmillan/Picador, 1997), Alain de Botton amusingly relates how Marcel's father even sent him to a brothel for the sake of his health; but the young man,

too excited mentally by the anticipation of pleasure, first broke a chamber pot, and then was unable to have sex—as he confesses candidly in a letter to his grandfather (182). The same incident is recounted by Jean-Yves Tadié in his biography *Marcel Proust* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), 71. On the same page, Tadié refers to a letter the young Marcel wrote Jacques Bizet, just when Mme Proust had forbidden her son to receive Jacques; Marcel's father had begged him not to masturbate for at least four days, "de cesser au moins quatre jours de se masturber."

30. "Une opinion moins innocente et qui fut la cause de violentes persécutions fut d'accuser les Juifs d'avoir empoisonné les puits en y jetant une mixture composée d'araignées, de sang, de bubons et d'animaux vénéneux," A. Proust, *La Défense*. BNF Gallica, 48, screen 60.

31. See Juliette Hassine, *Marranisme et hébraïsme dans l'œuvre de Proust* (Paris: Minard, 1994). Proust knew the Reinach family personally; though not exact contemporaries—Théodore was eleven years older—both had attended the Lycée Condorcet.

32. "Les Juifs empoisonnèrent les puits et les fontaines,' tel fut le cri qui retentit partout, comme trente ans auparavant en Guyenne." Reinach, 173.

33. "In defending Dreyfus, Proust not only angered conservative, Catholic, pro-army aristocrats, but he also alienated his own father." E. White, *Marcel Proust*, chap. 1.

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10

Authorial Second Lives

Machaut, Chaucer, and Philip Roth

R. BARTON PALMER

The Legend of Good Women and the *Jugement Navarre*

That Chaucer read with interest and admiration several of the narrative poems penned by his most eminent French contemporary, Guillaume de Machaut, was established in the early decades of modern Chaucer criticism by, among others, George Lyman Kittredge. Kittredge demonstrated decisively that Chaucer's maiden poetic effort, *The Book of the Duchess*, was a bricolage of passages and motifs derived largely from Machaut (with a healthy admixture of similar gleanings from Machaut's younger contemporary Jean Froissart). Kittredge also briefly noted that the formal structure of Chaucer's Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women* seemed to have been derived from the *Navarre* (see Kittredge).

Kittredge's pioneering efforts at identifying and evaluating Chaucer's indebtedness to his French contemporary were further, and most persuasively, developed some years later by Robert Estrich, who argued that derived from the *Navarre* were the *Prologue* and, more significantly, the plan for connecting the various legends to a framing fiction in which a fabulized version of the poet is called to account by a patron outraged by supposed artistic malfeasance and to be rectified by a writerly penance (see Estrich). As Estrich shows, the sui generis similarities between the two works make any other conclusion unsustainable, especially since

Kittredge had demonstrated beyond any doubt that Chaucer was very familiar with Machaut's *dits*, including the *Navarre*, and that he was able and willing to translate accurately numerous passages, which he then seamlessly incorporated into several of his early works.

In the *Legend*, Chaucer engages substantially with the *Navarre* and, more generally, the tradition of the *dit*, to whose signal qualities he was quite drawn. The *Legend* asks, and I would say ostentatiously and self-consciously, to be read within that tradition, making it the most markedly French of his major works. At the very least, it seems incontestable that the *Legend* and *The Book of the Duchess* must be understood as substantial appropriations of Machaut's works—that is, not as adaptations or imitations, but as manifesting a large-scale re-use and recontextualization of borrowed materials, including compositional plan in the largest sense. But Chaucerians have for the most part resisted viewing these works within their French context.

Given the work of Kittredge and their several brilliant modern followers (including James Wimsatt, William Calin, and Ardis Butterfield), it should not be necessary to advocate a critical position that might be accurately termed self-evident.[1] The fact is, however, that work on the *Legend* since Estrich continues to ignore or, more often, minimize its sourcing in Machaut's *Navarre*. For example, in a pioneering book devoted exclusively to that poem in 1972, Robert Worth Frank, Jr., one of the most eminent and accomplished Chaucerians of his generation, regards the *Legend* as exclusively a recasting of materials supposedly borrowed directly from Ovid; and his critical analysis emphasizes the stories that constitute the poetic penance the narrator is asked to undertake rather than on the various ways in which the Prologue and the legends are connected (see Frank).

It is in the work's framing fiction that Machaut's influence is strongest. Chaucer borrows from him the idea of contextualizing embedded stories as artistic performance, thereby providing an intratextual protocol for their reading, as in the process they are connected to a fabulized or second life version of the author, whose proper respect for women is to be judged by these textual results. Not to pile on, but Frank neglects not just the influence of Machaut but also his French contemporary's use of the monumental early fourteenth-century French translation of Ovid, the *Ovide moralisé*, whose incredible popularity among the later poets of that

generation, French, English, and Italian, can hardly be overemphasized. John Livingston Lowes, for one, had early on in Chaucer studies argued persuasively that Chaucer was well-acquainted with that monumental collection of stories and elaborate moralizations. The *Legend* drew both directly on that material and on Machaut's own appropriations of it, as Lowes argued with the fastidiousness of a careful philologist (see Lowes). There is no reason to doubt his conclusion.

Also disappointing is that a more recent book by Sheila Delaney devoted to *The Legend of Good Women* promises a full analysis of the poem's literary and cultural context, but contains not a single reference to Machaut, or to the pioneering work of the early philologists who established the *Navarre* as a principal source of the work (see Delaney). It is unimaginable that such a meticulous scholar as Delaney might be ignorant of the relevant scholarship. In any case, with reference specifically to the *Legend*, it is cheering that this reluctance to admit that this work is an appropriation of material that Chaucer found in the *Navarre* is rectified in part by Florence Percival, who admits Machaldian influence here and there, especially in the legends themselves (see Percival). But, rejecting the perceptions of Kittredge, Estrich, and others, she, too, refuses to acknowledge that Chaucer adapted Machaut's unusual formal structure and the central concept of a fabulized version of the author qua author, with the attendant displacement of the judgment of poetic performance from its natural place within the story world to the extratextual, existential realm of comprehension and appreciation. This is a space of judgment that readers, of course, share with the interested and engaged public—the mythological figures of Alceste and the God of Love—that the Prologue constructs as the diegetic readership for the efforts of "Chaucer."

What Chaucer found in and took from the *Navarre* is the way in which the love poem genre can be turned toward a complex, engaging exploration of the poetics of authorship. In his reading and study of the French master, he encountered a work that for its courtly audience, including patrons actual and anticipated, holds up a mirror in which they might glimpse their own activity. The *Navarre* and the *Legend*, in fact, are unlike all other medieval works in their complex dramatizations of the service afforded the aristocracy by their literary servants. Elsewhere, I have sketched the ways in which the *Legend* may interestingly and profitably be read within the context of its appropriated source, emphasizing Chaucer's

rejection of the allegorical debate at the center of the *Judgment of the King of Navarre*, for which he substitutes narrative penance *in extenso* in the form of the various legends (see Palmer, "Narrator of Chaucer's *Legend*"). Among other effects (including a much stronger emphasis on storytelling), this formal change makes the reading out of authorial *sentement* much more problematic than in Machaut's debate series, which ends with a penitential lyric that, at least ostensibly, offers a correction to the supposed masculinism of the first debate, the *Judgment of the King of Bohemia* (see the preface to this volume for further discussion). With its elaborate, aesthetically complex expression of feminine grief in lyric form, the *Lay de Plour* is a double testament to the importance that the poet, now supposedly properly reformed, pays to womanly emotion, with his talent and investment in the process of inner change expressed in the graceful taming of a demanding formal structure. As the implied voice of the lyric, Machaut (as author and as intratextual narrator) literally puts himself in the shoes of the character whose persistence in loving and whose demand for proper attention and sympathy he has been found guilty of hitherto neglecting.

No less burdensome, of course, is the evident labor that the chastened Chaucer puts into the confection of his legends, sometimes working with material such as the life of Cleopatra that does not make it easy to praise feminine virtue, at least not in conventional ways. Chaucer, in any case, does not fully adopt the seriality that ties the three Machaut works together; his Prologue refers back to an authorial oeuvre rather than to a single previous work whose particular purported thematic incorrectness can be rectified through recantation in the texts required to follow. The two-part structure he designs is simpler (an unexpected accusation followed by open-ended penance in the glory-promoting genre of the legend), but then, disappearing behind the narration of inherited stories, he allows himself no way to complete the cycle of textual interconnection in the elaborate and perhaps ironic fashion exemplified by the *Lay de Plour*.

But the legends also ask to be understood in terms of the plight of the "author." Like the *Lay de Plour*, these penitential works might be read as exemplifying a change in heart even though lacking any direct acknowledgment of presumed ideological error; in terms of their composition, within the context of the story world conjured into existence by the

Prologue, they testify to the submission of "Chaucer" to the will of his patrons. And yet the legends might also be seen as an exercise in technical virtuosity empty of any deep authorial feeling save a desire for reconciliation. This much is certain. Found mistaken in his judgment, "Guillaume" neatly sidesteps the direct literary acknowledgment of any error despite his humble, even gracious acceptance of the condemnation visited upon him by the court before whom he unwillingly performs. The existential Guillaume, of course, was never in the dock; his amusing inventiveness and writerly finesse fashioned the diegetic world in which his other self bumbles and stumbles, revealing that he is less the servant of a noble femininity and more the misogynistic clerk conforming to an unfortunate stereotype.

More might be said about the multifarious connections between the debate series (especially the *Navarre*) and its Chaucerian remaking. In the remainder of this essay, however, I intend to take the discussion of the two works in another direction entirely, one that is more interesting from the viewpoint of literary history writ a bit larger, beyond the Middle Ages in fact. Machaut and Chaucer pursue in each case a form of writing that we can usefully call the novelistic by foregrounding the creation of textual second lives for themselves as authors. My point is that the legacy of these premodern works is in many ways their paradoxical postmodernity, or, more precisely, what about literary postmodernity they seem to so presciently forecast. In interesting ways, Machaut and Chaucer are the literary antecedents (just to seize on one appropriate example among many others) of contemporary American novelist Philip Roth, the nature of whose fiction can be traced, if indirectly and in general terms, to the late medieval *dit.*

Self-Chronicles of the Star Author

In Philip Roth's 1981 novel *Zuckerman Unbound* (the second installment in the trilogy collectively entitled *Zuckerman Bound*, which was inaugurated by *The Ghost Writer* [1979] and concluded with *The Anatomy Lesson* [1983]), writer Nathan Zuckerman suffers the indignities and inconveniences, including angry and disappointed readers, that are the common lot of the newly famous author, at least after he earns great wealth and

widespread public recognition with the publication of a scandalous novel. *Carnovsky*, as he reports, is an exuberant narrative of the eponymous main character's compulsively extravagant sexual life, whose antecedents might be John Cleland's *Fanny Hill* (1748) and Walter's *My Secret Life* (1888). Zuckerman's novel thus joins a tradition of works that exist on the border between serious writing and pornography, constituting a genre that some critics call sexual fiction.[2] The presumed autobiographical element in *Carnovsky* angers and disappoints Zuckerman's family, who feel themselves ill-used and defamed. Leaders in the Jewish intelligentsia rail against Zuckerman's supposed vilification of his ethnic inheritance, already sensitive to the widespread anti-Semitism in American culture and expecting Jew haters to take Carnovsky's unrestrained ribaldry as a mark of the community's disrespectful cosmopolitanism. Even the vast metropolis of New York City fails to provide protective anonymity. A stranger accosts Zuckerman on the street, and, revealing himself to be the polymath Alvin Pepler, pursues the author mercilessly for purportedly stealing the details of his miserable life as the material from which the novel's main character was created. Zuckerman is pilloried for defamation even while being accused, however improbably, of plagiarism. Fame brings a plague of angry readers.

Fame, however, also brings wealth to Zuckerman, as well as an endless supply of admiring and compliant women; he earns the admiration of his peers but also persistent harassment from those who see him as a pornographer and a plagiarist. Pepler is a quiz show whiz whose dreams of celebrity were destroyed by the manipulative fakery of producers who forced him to give a wrong answer in order to promote his opponent, considered to be more telegenic and marketable (see Hoerschelmann). The novel engages here with one of the signal cultural events of the 1950s: the cheating scandal that involved Herb Stempel and Columbia professor Charles Van Doren, whose appearance on the show *Twenty One* was stage-managed in a bid to increase the size of the TV audience, who were presumed to prefer the charismatic WASP professor to the homely Jewish trivia maven whose hobby was reading encyclopedias. Herb Stempel, thinly disguised as Pepler, appears in the novel both as himself and as an archetypal figure of the fictional narrative it presents, as the unrecognized but deserving "other" to the man who uses him to obtain celebrity and acclaim, a reflection, of course, of what had been in "real life" his unfortunate experience.

As he thinks, his is the notorious life from which an undeserving other has drawn profit and position, much as he was used by the quiz show producers to provide a suitable contrast to his über-gentile opponent, with his purposefully temporary fame as a winner used to increase ratings.

As most of its original readers were well aware, *Zuckerman Unbound* replays, spoofs, and comments ironically upon the success that Roth himself achieved with the publication of his novel *Portnoy's Complaint* in 1969, which chronicled the sex and intimate family life of its "good boy" Jewish protagonist. Because of the book's unparalleled notoriety, Roth was harshly criticized by many within the Jewish intelligentsia, including key figures such as Irving Howe and Diana Trilling. Summing up the damage Roth purportedly had done to the American Jewish community, Howe predicts that the publication of the novel has

> Signaled an end to philo-Semitism in American culture, [so] one no longer had to listen to all that talk about Jewish morality, Jewish endurance, Jewish wisdom, Jewish families. Here was Philip Roth himself . . . confirming what had always been suspected about those immigrant Jews but had recently not been tactful to say. (Howe 243)

Like Bonneürté in the *Navarre* and the God of Love in the *Legend*, Howe speaks in defense of a group that considered itself undeservedly slandered in a work of fiction by what these prominent spokespersons see as distorted representations of its collective nature. Roth has Howe's fictional reflex in the trilogy, Milton Appel, voice much the same complaint. Thus Roth's intratextual other struggles to deal with attacks similar to those that the author endured in real life.

Zuckerman finds himself trapped like his fictional creation by the irresistible appeal of the unrestrained sexual indulgence to which his celebrity status affords him constant access. Having created a "Carnovsky," he now finds himself becoming one, enjoying a standing entrée to the public life of the glitterati, whose frenzied coupling he comes to share. Furthermore, his celebrity allows him to transcend the desperate and disappointed urgings of family and community; he can live elsewhere and fail to answer the phone. His father engages one of the community's most respected figures to set Nathan straight, but their discussion ends in rancorous failure. Now a star, Zuckerman, so he senses, no longer has to worry about being a Jew.

The difference between the medieval authors and their modern reflexes (both existential and fabulized) is that the textual versions of Machaut and Chaucer must bend to the wishes of angry readers and indulge in writerly forms of penance that are intended to effect and ingrain in them the sanctioned view of femininity. Ironically, of course, the texts in question furnish no unambiguous evidence of reformation. Despite the disapproval of those he loves and respects, Zuckerman, at least at first, does not renounce the oedipal release into Enlightenment universalism that Howe thinks Portnoy, and by extension his creator, are after. He is no longer interested in playing the role of either the good son or the respectful member of the American Jewish community who is conscious that the goyim might judge all Jews by his supposedly bad example. Here the relationships between Roth and Portnoy, on the one hand, and Zuckerman and Carnovsky on the other seem especially complementary, with the lines between life and art made increasingly difficult to define.

Portnoy is a character, so Howe has written, whose most intense desire is "to be left alone, to be released from the claims of distinctiveness and the burdens of the past, so that, out of his own nothingness he may create himself as a 'human being'" (242). For Zuckerman, as chronicled in *The Anatomy Lesson*, this isolation and the writing of the self to which it leads proves ultimately disabling on every level. The turn inward, so he comes to believe, has induced a form of creative paralysis that manifests itself in persistent back trouble that neither drugs nor treatment seem able to alleviate. Reduced to immobility, Zuckerman in the most literal of senses cannot write, ironically enough since he finds nothing to write about except not writing. In the end, he is forced to see the truth in Appel's criticism that a fictionalizing of the self leads nowhere. No writerly escape from this compositional and existential dead-end appears.

Neither Roth/Zuckerman (nor Howe/Appel for that matter) imagines some form of salvific literary penance that Zuckerman might perform. How to take back the ethnic calumny that has been publicly perpetrated? How to recalibrate the exploration of self to include the community whose experience has slipped from authorial view? Roth's answer to these implicit questions is supplied by his late career American Trilogy (*American Pastoral* [1997], *I Married a Communist* [1998], and *The Human Stain* [2000]); in that series, Nathan Zuckerman recasts himself as a narrator/witness to the lives of Jews who have all taken paths very different from

his own. He becomes the willing, energetic, and perceptive chronicler of what others have experienced. This is reformation of a sort, however late in coming.

In contrast, reformation (either real or pretended) is the game that the textual Machaut and Chaucer eagerly embrace. Their authorial second selves are desperate to remain at one with those above them. Celebrity, which is to say their hard-earned social prominence, depends upon submission to a code of values that in part excludes them, as would be true for the authors themselves of course. All are at best bourgeois figures in aristocratic worlds. Their status, paradoxically enough, derives from their subordination to patrons who provide opportunities to create but whose judgment of the literary results might be a surprising and perhaps unwarranted condemnation.

The foolishness of Guillaume's initial refusal to accept the correction of the lady who has been the ground of his success is compounded by a bungling defense of this wrong opinion that only brings him further disgrace and embarrassment, as he evidences an antifeminism that reveals, even as it widens, the ideological gulf between him and those of the class above. Chastened, he accepts the penance assigned him once he realizes that the patroness who reveals herself to him is actually "Happiness," a metaphysical force only the deranged would resist. In the *Legend*, the intervention of Alceste prevents the God of Love from further outraged disputation with his ostensible servant Geoffrey Chaucer. No humiliating debate is needed to prompt authorial contrition, as a hierarchy-threatening instance of *lèse majesté* is neatly sidestepped. Guillaume in the *Navarre* has the temerity to contest Happiness's assessment of his judgment (in every sense), but the Prologue's Chaucer is fortunately relieved of a similar opportunity to dispute what should not be disputed by the timely intervention of Alceste.

Like Roth, Zuckerman need not play so subtly with the fine points of independent-minded submission to authority because the public sphere affords him another space to inhabit, with a much larger set of interested parties whose criteria of value are not restricted to aesthetics or ethnic solidarity. As Aimee Pozorski points out, the "well-known literary celebrity [is] recognized as much for literary output as well as a personal life that is perpetual fodder for tabloid news" (5). Controversy, authorial and as well as personal, is thus not an accident of the star-ness of such authors,

but the very ground of being upon which their constantly oscillating popularity must depend. Surely Roth knew that *Portnoy's Complaint* would be scandalous; he must have imagined, however, that success would follow quickly upon the cultural uproar. With "reputation" broadly considered becoming of preeminent value, the star author becomes a commodity, as life and works merge into an indissoluble, if always dynamic, whole; as Graeme Turner bluntly puts it, in today's thoroughly globalized consumer culture "celebrities are developed to make money," a use of "self" that Zuckerman discovers is indeed a central element of the entertainment industry of which he has somewhat unwittingly become a part (39). As a star, he is shielded from criticism in the usual sense since celebrities enjoy the privilege of being judged by more generous standards.

What is the significance for a history of prose fiction of a form of writing that, while contacting at uncertain points the slant truths of autobiography, challenges so interestingly and with great comic effect the customary division between fiction and "world" on which traditional notions of representation and, especially, realism seem so heavily to depend? Roth is by no means the only contemporary writer to explore this form. Just to take another prominent example, consider the complex meditations on authorship and autobiography offered by Norman Mailer in *Advertisements for Myself* (1959) and *The Armies of the Night* (1968). This trend in recent decades has been prominent enough to be chronicled and sharply analyzed in Joe Moran's useful volume *Star Authors: Literary Celebrity in America*, while contemporary inflections of celebrity, textual and existential, have unsurprisingly become a focus in Roth studies (see Moran).

It is surely significant that the self-conscious form of fiction we might call "literary second life" is by no means an exclusive feature of postmodernity, as we might expect, though it seems to have much in common with the other forms of metafictional games-playing that are common to the literature of the postwar era, as, for example, the re-definition of embedded fictionality and authorial context in Roth's own *My Life as a Man* (1974) and *The Counterlife* (1986). A telling form of ontological shift often occurs in works that manifest this particular type of narcissism, which is that what was originally extradiegetic (the author producing a text for readers) becomes diegetic, as textual inside and outside change places or, perhaps better, are mutually imbricated in a self-conscious fashion that undermines any sense of illusionism. The writer as writer turns into a

character, while the extratextual facticity of his compositional career becomes the plot that is traced by this new level of fiction at the second degree, which, once textualized, is inevitably poised unstably between auto- and pseudo-autobiography no matter how "true" it might be.

And yet, however much it involves a playing with levels or degrees of fictionality and extratextual "reality," metafictional literary second life proves not to be a unique symptom of that artistic exhaustion that Fredric Jameson has pointed out is peculiar to the contemporary cultural scene.[3] To be sure, if we follow the analysis that Jameson offers of how capitalism has destroyed group praxis and thereby problematized artistic production, it seems plausible enough that some of our most notable authors, finding nothing to say about a world that increasingly eludes, bewilders, or bores them, would have turned inward in something like a narcissistic death spiral, dissolving away as no longer significant the hitherto impermeable boundaries between text and self, as the novels they write are transformed into subject matter, into grist for the very mill from which they issued.

Texts beget texts as the world, especially the public world, is abandoned as a compelling object of representation and source of intriguing story, leaving the author, his triumphs and discontents, in the spotlight, along, of course, with literary history itself. This authorial personage, as fabulized as he is real, is both diegetic and extradiegetic, a presence who functions as a character but also as the master of ceremonies who creates and directs the characters, including himself. He may share a name with his fully existential correlative (some of Roth's novels feature a main character named Philip Roth), but he also might be lightly disguised, as in the *Zuckerman Bound* trilogy, where the protagonist is provided with a background similar to that of his author (he starts out as a bright, would-be writer from a New Jersey Jewish community similar to the Weequahic neighborhood of Newark where Roth was born and raised). Zuckerman emerges more clearly as Roth's fabulized double in *Zuckerman Unbound*, as his authorial career comes to mirror the *succès de scandale* achieved by Roth himself.

Similarly, different versions of Machaut's "self" figure in the *Jugement Behaingne*, where his textual reflex is anonymous until the closing anagram, and the *Navarre*, where Guillaume, at first a shadowy figure observing the historical scene, is then dramatically recognized and named

as himself, a gesture of sorts toward his evident "knownness," a complimentary movement toward the acknowledgment of public self that is imitated in Chaucer's Prologue and finds its modern reflex in the "invention" of a novel called *Carnovsky*, the kind of unparalleled literary and cultural event that can only refer to the similarly unique *Portnoy's Complaint*. It is precisely at these textual moments that the narrators emerge as authors and also as main characters, with their prominence and accomplishment becoming in some sense the grounds for accusation. Though "Chaucer" disappears from diegetic presence once he begins the composition of the penitential legends, "he" is present continuously as the writerly self from whom these versions of time-honored tales emerge. His demonstration of the properly respectful attitude toward women is to be judged as present (or not) in these required narrational gestures, in the stories that exist both as tributes to feminine virtue and as worlds of meaning making sufficient unto themselves since they make concrete the desire of the chastened narrator to obey the command of his patrons. It is crucial that he is not their author as such, for his performance in furthering their cultural life as their teller is what is deemed crucial by the angry exalted personages of the Prologue, Alceste and the God of Love. In both the legends and the *Lay de Plour*, what is at stake is writerly submission to a command so fundamental it should not have to be uttered but for the impossibly obtuse self-absorption and overconfidence of the two faux-feckless authors.

And so, with all due respect to the understanding of postmodern self-consciousness promoted by theorists such as Frederic Jameson and Linda Hutcheon, it is in the premodern era that writing devoted to what we might call the literary second life first appears, a form of semi-fictionalized selfhood that an author can choose at times to inhabit. In these works, the courtly mode of literary production is transformed from context into theme, as textual outsides are turned into insides, constructing a new outer layer that the implied author now comes to inhabit. A comic contrast opens up between existential authorial selves who find themselves at the height of their powers, including the ability to textualize the hapless experiences of fabulized intertextual others: a Guillaume or Geoffrey whose poetic practice is severely criticized, a Nathan Zuckerman reduced in *The Anatomy Lesson* to a perhaps psychosomatic illness that keeps him from writing and persuades him to abandon his career as

an author altogether. Embracing a cultural stereotype, he muses about going to medical school, marking out for himself a different form of engagement with the body.

At the end of the Middle Ages, the breakdown within late capitalism of the traditional social formation in which the artist spoke from, to, and for his community had quite obviously not then occurred. There still existed in this earlier era what Jameson terms "something like an aesthetic contract between a cultural producer and a certain homogeneous class or group public (18). The particular form of literary self-consciousness we are tracing here appears suddenly, even shockingly in the middle of the fourteenth century. It is a change signaled by a radically innovative generic shift, as the roman or verse narrative that first took shape in the twelfth century begins to cede prominence to the *dit* or "tale," the masters of which were Chaucer, Machaut, and those who were the immediate inheritors of their literary legacy.

As discussed with more detail in the introduction to this volume, the *dit* is a syncretic form in the sense that it absorbs, reorients, and even personalizes themes and narrative motifs borrowed from other secular and learned traditions, advertising thereby the unique vision of the author. The *dit*, from our vantage point, seems markedly proto-novelistic in this striving after uniqueness, in this rejection or re-purposing of communal, accepted themes and structures. In Machaut's hands, the *dit* customarily, though by no means always, traces the experiences of a narrating-"I" (who "voices" all the words in the story, even as he reports or quotes those assigned to other characters, among whom he numbers an earlier version of himself). The "I" that speaks is thus also the "I" that experiences, and both those "I's" customarily understand and portray themselves as practicing the writer's craft, which is depicted as both rewarding and also filled with troubles of various kinds, a life of writing that connects, sometimes obliquely, sometimes directly to Machaut's own extratextual experiences, as these can be confirmed by other works in his substantial oeuvre.

Like Roth's *Zuckerman Bound* (and indeed several of his other novels), many of Machaut's *dits* offer tantalizing but ultimately (and deliberately) unreliable insights into the author's life as lived. What these untrustworthy "biographical" details construct is a portrait of the artist imbricated within but lived as well outside the works that he creates. In the late

Middle Ages, the poet was often central to their public performance as well, increasing the sense in which there was an authorial "I" present in these texts but also behind them, a real person participating as one of the principal players in that pretend game called storytelling.

The diegetic versions of these medieval authors cast themselves in that role we might call the "producing-I," the self whose experiences with writing texts become the material of yet other texts written by the same self (a self that, to continue the logic of such a representation of authorship, is itself written by the texts it writes). These selves occupy an unstable ontological space between imaginative fabulizing and autobiographical revelation, always gesturing beyond the boundaries of the text, grounding themselves in the facts of authorship, facts that were quite likely known to many of the readers and listeners at court. *Dits* that center around literary second lives actualize, on a grand scale, mises-en-abîme for the writerly enterprise as a whole as they represent and dramatize all the different elements of the mode of literary production from which they emerge, acknowledging not only the (dis)contents of authorship but also the role that patrons play in the commissioning, approval, and even revision of what is produced for them.

A bit of textual archaeology demonstrates that the producing-I actualizes Machaut's desire to create a supratextual artistic self that suits the notion of "poet," a way of conceiving authorship that in both the ancient and modern senses was beginning to reemerge at this moment in Northern France, a development comprehensively traced by literary historian Burt Kimmelman, among others (see Kimmelman). In a refashioning of the literary enterprise that anticipates the modern concept of the book as coincident with authorial intent, Machaut's desire to be a poet finds its material reflex in the omnibus manuscripts devoted exclusively to his works and prepared—and the evidence for this is increasingly convincing—at the poet's direction, and, sometimes, it seems, under his supervision. In these lavishly illuminated and beautiful codices, he offers readers well-organized versions of his oeuvre, with the narrative works arranged in the order of their composition and his other productions, musical and poetic, neatly reproduced in generic groupings, an advertisement for a life that had been filled with immensely productive and well-ordered text-making.

In an elaborate verse *Prologue* composed especially for those collec-

tions prepared toward the end of his long life, Machaut depicts himself as approached by Nature and then Love with the command to compose new works devoted to traditional courtly themes, a duty that the author, humbled by the honor these exalted figures pay him, quickly accepts (see Palmer, *Guillaume* for text, translation, and discussion). In an allegorical drama that strains to dramatize something like the neoromantic notion of talent, Nature and Love further his efforts by turning over to his control a bevy of cooperative muses, who are to provide the newly minted poet with the technical knowledge and themes he requires to compose proper, pleasant poetry and music. Resonating with something of a self-glorifying Neoplatonism, the calls from Nature, and then from Love, evoke, of course, the sense in which writers of this age were eager to imagine themselves as following the commissioning of their aristocratic (or in this case metaphysical) betters, but the *Prologue* points unmistakably as well (given the flexibility of allegorical reading) to the emergence of Machaut's dedication to artistic creation as a response to inner qualities, to what he possesses naturally, to the understanding of love that no one of refined sensibility needs to be instructed to attain.

The *Prologue* evokes in this way the emergence of the author in his obedient, but thoroughly natural preminence as special and worthy of celebration for what he is able to accomplish. As a self-regarding text, the *Prologue* promotes the celebrity of the author, whose fame is insured quite literally *avant la lettre*, with an implicitly boastful acknowledgment of his extraordinariness-to-be; the supposed fictionality of the text alleviates this self-vision of any charge of pridefulness, as Machaut's election is balanced by his humble acceptance of the charge he does not seek out but dares not refuse for fear of giving offense. Written late in his career, the *Prologue* offers a serious approach to understanding the commissioning of poetic (and musical) work. Its self-aggrandizement says something about Machaut the man who conceived and composed it. In the context of the rich oeuvre it forecasts and authorizes, it also offers an intriguing riposte to the debate series and the *Navarre* in particular, where the desire of the poet to follow such commands is shown to be not quite as straightforward and problematic as he here promises Nature and Love it will be. Because he rudely challenges the authority of Bonneürté, and in the process revealing something of an antifeminist bias, Guillaume at least throws

into question the decision of those two deities to make him their spokesman. Irony of ironies, his compositional commission is renewed by them only as punishment.

With its extravagant exploitation of the freedom that the Supreme Court had recently granted novelists to portray sexual experience (see Roth [no relation to the novelist] v. United States, 1957) and in the wake of the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* case in Britain (decided in favor of Penguin Books, Lawrence's publisher, 1960), *Portnoy's Complaint* achieved a notoriety that was then unrivaled, largely because it dealt with acts that had not been treated, at least with such profuse detail and brio even in those postwar novels designed to offend traditional sensibilities, such as *Candy*, published in 1958 by the infamous Olympia Press under the nom de plume Maxwell Kenton (actually Terry Southern and Mason Hoffenberg). Roth had established his modernist credentials with a series of respectable, if hardly wildly popular, works of careful social observation that had been penned in a kind of semi-Jamesian dramatic style with not a whiff of presentationalism or metafictionality. *Portnoy's Complaint*, in contrast, was more Lenny Bruce than Virginia Woolf, a stylistically extravagant first-person chronicle of the unrestrained erotic life of a civil rights attorney who is publicly committed to propriety.

The novel was both a response to and also a contributing factor in the so-called sexual revolution of the era, and its intimate self-portrait outs, among other newly available literary themes, the masturbatory fury of early adolescence, even as it boldly decouples erotic interest from romantic attachment, purveying in part an unabashed misogyny toward the narrator's steady girlfriend (if that is the appropriate term), a shiksa willing to indulge in the most inventive of Portnoy's sexual fantasies who is cruelly nicknamed the "Monkey." This character seems to be based on Roth's ex-wife—a gesture that enacts the kind of revenge made perhaps too available to novelists and that increases the book's autobiographical reach (Portnoy's upbringing and early life more or less fit the pattern of Roth's—and, later, Zuckerman's—as many readers would know or soon learn as the novel's fame and his own exponentially expanded).

Published at a time when many, like Portnoy, were weary of stultifying virtue and eager for self-indulgence, the book turned Roth from a young writer known mostly to New York–based tastemakers into America's best-known literary celebrity, into a public figure who quickly became

a "household name," the writerly center of several forms of controversy, including continuing debate in America about the limits of First Amendment protection despite the Roth decision's expansive view of artistic freedom. This was strange territory indeed for a wordsmith who had earlier established his highbrow bona fides.

Defined equally by talent and acclaim, the literary celebrity holds, in the view of critic Joe Moran, a "contentiously intermediate position in relation to literary production as a whole" (7). Star authors represent in their double function as artists and high-earning entertainers the uneasy connections between literature as, on the one hand, the source of cultural capital and, on the other, as a commodity fully marketable within developed capitalism, as the writer becomes not only committed to art (whatever exactly that might mean), but also to providing highly remunerated entertainment, a social status established and reinforced by the media, which cultivate a symbiotic relationship with authors who have demonstrated unusual popular appeal. With its protagonist self-confessedly torn between his commitment to a useful life of public service and his irresistible compulsion to explore the entire repertoire of sexual experience, *Portnoy's Complaint* neatly images the division of the star author into competing identities, as he finds himself uneasily balanced between his dedication to serious art and his simultaneous embrace of a role as a demotic spokesman who is credited with unusual courage for violating long-established taboos.

With the immense success of this novel, Roth passed into popular culture as a kind of writerly Alfred Kinsey who breaks the collective silence about the true nature of the sexual life, giving voice to the private experiences and fantasies of the multitude. To be sure, John Updike's *Couples* (1968) had scandalized the literary establishment the year before with its portrait of suburban adultery, replete with detailed descriptions of lovemaking, a theme that Updike very much claimed as his own in a series of other novels (such as *A Month of Sundays* [1974], the first installment in what would become the author's Scarlet Letter trilogy). But these books remained firmly within a middlebrow/highbrow tradition of marital melodrama explored since the 1950s by John O'Hara, Grace Metalious, Harold Robbins, and many others. Only Roth coupled a further breaking of representational taboos about the private life with the confection of a literary second self that animated and problematized such fictionalizing,

turning himself into the celebrity that Updike, even with his own fair share of fame, never became and, it seems, never wanted to become.

Putting a thinly disguised version of himself at the center of such fiction was a daring feat for which the rewards at that cultural moment proved to be very high. It is estimated that prior to publication, *Portnoy's Complaint* had earned Roth more than a million dollars (a quite substantial sum at the time) from the sales of film rights, book club releases, and serialization. In the star author, the late nineteenth-century distinction between highbrow and lowbrow thus breaks down, a collapse that can be seen both in Roth's experiences with celebrity (as revealed in his autobiographical writings) and with the intellectualized version of the resulting synthesizing process that catches him up, which is perhaps the main theme of the literary second life fictionalizing in the *Zuckerman* trilogy.

If, as Jameson argues, the vocation for the modernist text is *not* to be a commodity, to "devise an aesthetic language incapable of offering commodity satisfaction and resistant to instrumentalization," then in the practice of the star author this vocation is transformed, as both the work and author become commodities capable of profitable circulation across the now bewildering variety of modern media (16). In Moran's minimizing formulation, such a development has provoked "intense discussion" about how literary celebrity conducts "an uneasy negotiation between marketability and cultural authority" (20). One of the most engaging sites where that intense discussion takes place is in the *Zuckerman Bound* trilogy, a meditation on Roth's star author status that also confirms and extends it, turning the author and his writing into subject matter that memorializes, even as it anatomizes, the notoriety achieved by *Portnoy's Complaint*.

The contexts in which Machaut and Chaucer composed narrative poetry, and Roth a continuing flow of respected, if also at times, sensational fiction, share something deeply significant. In each case, a literary culture emerges in which the author becomes a publicly acknowledged notable who possesses the capacity to offend but also to entertain, marking a clear difference from a previous model of authorship. In the case of Machaut, this would be the anonymous or barely self-revealing continuator of the textual tradition that enfolds and defines him, the writer whose devotion to some "matter" provides the basis for the invention of narrative. The characteristic roman of the High French Middle Ages is often either

figuratively or literally a continuation, an expansion in some sense of a text by an anonymous continuator that was composed by some anonymous predecessor.

In the case of Roth, the model to be transcended, or perhaps discarded, would be the ascetic and self-effacing modernist writer like E. I. Lonoff, who makes a notable appearance as the literary father of Zuckerman in *The Ghost Writer*. Lonoff (perhaps modeled on Saul Bellow) is the very antithesis of the star author; as Zuckerman reports, a solitary creator (as his name suggests) who "enjoys no readership or recognition . . . he refused all awards and degrees, declined memberships in all honorary institutions, granted no public interviews, and chose not to be photographed, as though to associate his face with his fiction were a ridiculous irrelevancy" (Roth 7). Lonoff sums up his life in similar terms; his artistic activity, to hear him tell it, is an inglorious preoccupation with stylistic perfection, a goal pursued endlessly by "turning sentences around," and he admits that otherwise "nothing happens to me," while revealing an impatience with any recreation, including a simple walk, that might distract him from his Sisyphean search for verbal perfection and cultural harmlessness (12). Uxorious to a virtuous fault, he refuses the amorous advances of a young female admirer, choosing instead to remain faithful to a wife who seems as bored with him as he is with her. While spending the night in Lonoff's study, Nathan muses that such respectability is dispensable; there is no reason, he thinks, why a Jewish writer should not show that he has blood in his penis, a creative urge soon to be actualized in the writing of *Carnovsky*, which Zuckerman indicates was a literary gesture carefully calculated to arouse a public sensation, precisely in the manner of its real life reflex.

If for the somewhat divergent reasons I have suggested, Machaut's late medieval northern France and our contemporary America equally became cultural landscapes in which, to quote Daniel Boorstin's famous comment about modern celebrity, an author could become "well-known for his well-knownness" (Boorstin 58). And an author's well-knownness, as the work of Machaut, Chaucer, and Roth establishes, could and did become an apt and pleasing subject for his own writing. John Cawelti has suggested that "the object of celebrity is the person; the object of fame is some accomplishment, action, or creative work" (54), but that distinction seems irrelevant in the texts under discussion here, in which

the ostensible barrier between author and expression is continually and comically breached by readers who insist on identifying a writer with the experiences and values found in his works. In aesthetic terms, in this instance we are far—as Roth himself dramatizes in the ironic portrait of the dedicated but perhaps also desiccated Lonoff—from high culture conceptions of the writer withdrawing into his craft and humbly exploring his gift, as he confects from his life and self a series of imaginative worlds that manifest demanding truths.

Milan Kundera, for one, speaks eloquently in favor of a modernist approach to a fabulizing that embeds the author's life deeply in his work but advises strongly against an autobiographical reading that in his view is little more than textual demolition. He writes: "According to a well-known metaphor, the novelist demolishes the house of his life and uses its bricks to construct another house: that of his novel. From which it follows that a novelist's biographers unmake what the novelist made, and remake what he unmade. Their labor, from the standpoint of art utterly negative, can illuminate neither the value nor the meaning of a novel" (146). Kundera neatly captures in this provocative formula the rich contradictoriness of the neoromantic conception of the writer, whose talent, thoughts, and experiences mark his work as original and whose life as such is the only material, the only bricks from which his texts can be constructed. But Kundera does not think this remaking as imitation, for that would allow the life, now re-presented in the work of fiction, to be available, to be a source of interest of readers, to be, in fact, the point of reference that enables them to make full sense of what they are reading. Such a work would proclaim its internal insufficiency by constant extradiegetic gesturing meant to be explanatory. Instead, for Kundera that remaking which is fictionalizing is nothing less than a demolition that causes the writer's life to disappear from view, establishing a border between the context that was and the text that is.

These ontological priorities can be reversed only if the novel suffers the indignity of being broken into its constituent parts by what he sees as the pointless labors of the literary biographer or the reader eager to identify the textual traces of the "real" author. In his role as the artist's dark shadow, the literary biographer builds something that is of no interest in itself by destroying the only form of the author that can aspire to immortality, and the biographically minded reader looks through the

verbal weave of the text to a set of related, but finally different references. In an interesting twist on the Horatian formula of ars longa, vita brevis, Kundera proclaims that "the moment Kafka draws more attention than Joseph K., the process of Kafka's posthumous dying begins" (147). But, we might ask, is that in fact inevitably so? May it not be that the author can have a life beyond life within his text, not only because of it, or so Machaut, Chaucer, and Roth would have us believe? Does he have to disappear so that the text might live? To be sure, as Kundera's endorsement of the biographical fallacy reminds us, literary second life is a practice that goes against much that we have thought about what fiction is or, at least, should be.

During the last several decades, the advent and now substantial presence of what Linda Hutcheon terms "narcissistic narrative" of different kinds has offered a provocative riposte to Erich Auerbach and those who have anticipated and followed him in arguing that the inherent goal of the novel is realism, whatever that much-vexed concept might mean and whatever superior moral and psychological value realism might be granted to possess. Robert Alter's *Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre*, published in 1975, provides an interesting account of the earlier stages of this trend, limning a version of the rise of the novelistic that follows a different path. Alter calls attention to how an ontological shift occurs in the way that the novel, at the moment of its emergence from the medieval roman, treats the generic project of mimesis.

To be sure, Alter follows Auerbach and company in maintaining that mimesis depends on the dialectic between fiction and "the world." This separation of "art" and life, of artifact from referent, of the act of living from the process of writing, is perhaps too easily granted, as literary second life fictionalizing demonstrates. In Alter's view, the novel properly speaking is born in early modern times with the anti-mimetic discovery—and subsequent humorous popularization—of the perception that the text is never real. Alter maintains that fiction offers a second reality only through its production of a world changed into language, and it is the communal realization of this fact in the West, conditioned by cultural events, that makes the fictional suddenly seem so very fictional. Here, so Alter believes, the invention of printing and the widespread distribution of printed materials proved to be crucial. It is the book as object that provides a continuing sense that what is contained between its covers ought

to be true simply because it takes that material form. And yet this is when the authority of the written, now printed, word begins to erode.

Don Quixote is said to inaugurate a tradition of fabulizing preoccupied with the psychological, moral, and even metaphysical implications of the perception that fiction is fiction even though its enjoyment commands a limited investment of belief on the part of readers, proffering attractive illusion. *Don Quixote* extends the tradition of chivalric narrative by turning that tradition into an examination of how its delusionary idealism, by altering the consciousness of naïve readers whose belief in the fables they read is *not* carefully and safely limited, can affect events in the real world. The novel thus dialogizes the patently fictional conventions of the romance through a realism that simultaneously challenges the truth value of the literary text. It is the realism in *Don Quixote* that Auerbach brilliantly analyzes, though he neglects, at least according to Alter, the main point Miguel de Cervantes appears to be making, which is to call attention to how the authority of the written text in general has been demonstrated to be very much less than solid, a source of persistent delusion in its failure to predict what might be found to be real, or even experienced as real, when found outside the text.

The irony explored by Cervantes is that fictionality, of course, can and often does play a role in the very life it can reproduce only as psychological effect. That role is to offer a suppositional delusion we partially embrace (we are not Quixote after all) in order to find it pleasurable. For Alter, the concern of fiction with fictionality broadly conceived finds its eclipse in the triumph of the nineteenth-century realists. And so, to take an obvious example, Gustave Flaubert in *Madame Bovary* sees quite differently than Cervantes the dangers that are posed by ill-advised reading. With a calculated attack on self-satisfied bourgeois culture, Flaubert imitates rather than parodies an overinvestment in appealing illusion. *Madame Bovary* is not self-conscious; as a text it finds no pleasure in illusion-bending address to the reader or the carefully calculated mise-en-abîme, which is the signature device of the metafictionalist. Instead, Flaubert's novel takes itself *au grand sérieux*. And this is to say that it does not take "itself" at all. In Alter's history of novelistic form, self-conscious fiction goes into severe decline as realism comes to dominate the novelistic scene (though its influence is still to be found in texts, otherwise ostensibly

realist, such as William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* [1847–48] and Herman Melville's *The Confidence-Man* [1857]).

Self-conscious fabulizing begins again to assert an important influence on the novel only with the advent of literary modernism in the early twentieth century. Literary modernism, according to Alter, is a multifaceted movement among whose emerging energies is an obtrusive self-consciousness about the processes of fiction-making. We should note well a certain slippage in Alter's historical narrative. The novel begins with a crisis of belief in the authority of the written word as something like the Derridean notion of *écriture* takes hold in culture, but a quite different form of self-consciousness takes hold in the early twentieth century with the growing preoccupation of writers with writing the process of writing, with the diegetic enactment of the labor, social and personal relations, and interior states that figure in the making of texts and their consumption. Quite unlikely, I think, is his explanation for the interest of modernists in texts that mirror their own making, namely that the sheer weight of history and the intellectual commitment that it seemed to demand had somehow forced writers to disengage from the world. More persuasive is his overall view that the history of the novel should be imagined as a dialectical process characterized by the repetition and reinstatement of what had gone on before. A plausible explanation to be sure, though one that with its vague Hegelianism reverses the strong emphasis on the one particular context with which his indispensable study begins.

Alter, it might be pointed out, could have paid more careful attention to how his very broad concept of self-consciousness might connect in divergent ways to other different, distinct, and irreproducible cultural moments. The Gutenberg revolution leads to a growing uncertainty about textual authority, and that uncertainty forms the epistemological context of *Don Quixote*, a tale that is preoccupied with the textual in its various forms, beginning in a library to which events or their telling sometimes circles back, along the way discovering texts and manuscripts of different truth value at seemingly every turn. And so if context helps us understand the emergence of *Don Quixote*, surely we are justified in asking what development in the literary mode of production might lie behind the turn of modernists and then postmodernists toward calling attention in various ways to the processes of fiction-making.

A clue to this puzzle is to be found, as I suggested at the outset, in what happens at the end of the Middle Ages with the emergence of the proto-modern figure of the author no longer enfolded entirely within a tradition that supplies him with matter and context, but, instead, newly granted the right to seek out and textualize what pleases him or her to do so. Is it any surprise that in such cultural circumstances the notion of literary second life should make an appearance, that is, at times when the author comes more into public view, eventually to become, in our own era as at the end of the Middle Ages, a media star authorized to confect the most outrageous forms of textual self-promotion? The cultural counterpart to this expansion of authorial freedom in the last century or so, of course, is the weakening of social and legal barriers against obscenity, with the *Lady Chatterley* case (1960) in Britain and *Roth v. New York* (1957) in the United States granting something close to unlimited latitude in the portrayal of human experience.

More important, perhaps, is the emergence of literary celebrity, a development particularly associated in the United States with the careers/lives of Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald. "To become a celebrity is to become a brand name," complained Roth after the success of *Portnoy* convinced the reading public that the author was one with the book's sex-obsessed protagonist (quoted in Moran 101). And yet Roth has at least in part embraced that depersonalizing reification, as text and self become less distinguishable from one another, a development for which he was of course himself largely responsible.

He could hardly have imagined that *Portnoy*, responding so perfectly and calculatingly to its cultural moment, would not achieve something like the notoriety it quickly did. If Roth, as Irving Howe suggested, should be found guilty of defamation, he should certainly confess as well to egregious self-dramatization. His is a conception of obtrusive authorship with which we might imagine both Chaucer and Machaut being somewhat in sympathy, or so the debate series and the *Legend* suggest. Roth's medieval counterparts trade in the same self-denunciations that he dramatizes comically but also at times movingly in the *Zuckerman Bound* trilogy. The French and English masters find and exploit a fourteenth-century fault line in sexual politics that corresponds to Roth's anatomizing of the constantly thought but never said, providing readers with a *scientia sexualis* in which, as Michel Foucault writes, we "find pleasure in the truth of

pleasure, the pleasure of knowing the truth, of discovering and exposing it, the fascination of seeing and telling it, of captivating and capturing others by it" (57, 71). Much the same might be said of the *scientia feminarum* that provides Chaucer and Machaut with their provocative, if not scandalous, materials. But does it matter? Such musings, deliberations, and angry exchanges are in the end best understood as pre-text, thematic excuses for sly celebrations of technical sprezzatura that attest to the power of authors freed to write the self, even if the result is pseudo-autobiographical fabulation with a small dose of authenticating truth.

Notes

1. See particularly James I. Wimsatt, *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries: Natural Music in the Fourteenth Century* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1992); William C. Calin, *The French Tradition and the Literature of Medieval England* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1994); and Ardis Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language and Nation in the Hundred Years War* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009).

2. For further discussion, see Maurice Charney, *Sexual Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 1981).

3. See in particular the various essays collected in *The Cultural Turn: Selection Writings on the Postmodern 1983–1998* (London: Verso, 2009), as well as his *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1992).

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